Environmental Pragmatism, Systematism and the Reach of Environmental Ethics

Anders Krosshavn Vik

Master thesis of philosophy, IFIKK
Faculty of Humanities

Supervisor: prof. Arne Johan Vetlesen

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Autumn 2014

Environmental Pragmatism, Systematism and the Reach of Environmental Ethics

2014

Title: Environmental Pragmatism, Systematism and the Reach of Environmental Ethics

Author: Anders Krosshavn Vik

http://www.duo.uio.no/

Print: Norsk Aero AS

IV

The more conventional opinion gets fixated on the antithesis of truth and falsity, the more it tends to expect a given philosophical system to be either accepted or contradicted; and hence it finds only acceptance or rejection.[…] The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth of it instead.

– G. W. F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit

Abstract

This thesis deals with and defends the position in environmental philosophy known as environmental pragmatism. Contextualized against the dominant background of monistic non-anthropocentric theories in environmental ethics, this position attempts an alternative account both of intrinsic value in non-human nature, and of the task of ethics in itself. Presenting some contributions from such authors as Bryan Norton, Anthony Weston, Andrew Light, Kelly Parker and Ben Minteer, the work attempts to promote a stronger practical orientation in environmental ethics which seeks to make contributions to solving concrete problems and become relevant to environmental policy. As a continuation of this project, I suggest a further expansion which I call ‘systematism’ which attempts to reorient ethics in light of large scale social dynamics and their implications for agency and an effective ethical framework.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents for their love and support throughout my project. My father in particular for his heroic last minute proofreads. You are the goodest English teacher of all. Also my mother for her care and encouragement when I needed it the most. Thank you both for teaching me to think for myself. I also extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Arne Johan, who has been the invaluable source of immersive discussions which I regret now being over. Whatever merit pertains to this work I share with the above, although its faults, to be sure, are mine alone.

Thank you Facebook for your many distractions, but also for the likes you will now no doubt bestow upon me.

Thank you last but not least Ellen for your loving support and for the countless cups of coffee served at the bedside. I promise I will now start helping with the laundry again.

Preface

From a very young age, there was a distinct sense in my mind about the importance of sustainability and finitude. At about 4 or 5 I remember realizing that pealing snots from my nose and flicking them on the floor, was not a good idea if left unchecked in the long run. At about 10, I once declared to my parents how, when I grew up I would combat deforestation by ensuring every chopped tree be replaced by 10 more. My understanding, I hope, has since evolved, but my attitude, no doubt remained the same. Thus, my interest was soon sparked upon discovering environmental philosophy as an undergraduate. That year's semester paper, however, proved to be a limited arena for exploring the many ideas that had caught my attention. My agreements with some of them, and indeed reservations against others were left unsatisfactorily articulated, some of which I hope will be better served here.

The current work attempts to form a picture of these reservations and present an alternative position, which I luckily discovered as sharing many of my own concerns. This somewhat unknown position, known as environmental pragmatism, is here my main area of inquiry put against a background of clustering ethical positions, which I argue constitute a main paradigm in the field today. The criticism of these positions, known as monistic non-anthropocentrisms, contains both an ethical and a meta-ethical component. The first level ethical objection is that their approach to ethical theory in general is too atomistic and too theoretically confined to absolutes and dualistic distinctions. The atomistic and foundational concept of value fundamental to such ethics fails to capture the relational and interchanging character of values which defines our experience with them and which serve not only identity value attain their identities through their relationship to other values. I attempt to outline an alternative pragmatic understanding of value, which abandons the effort to capture the exact nature of each value in isolation. Thus, it takes a pluralistic approach to ethics, attempting to open the doors for cooperation. It blurs the many sharp distinctions and exclusive categories often made by monistic theories, thereby rejecting the paradigmatic project of finding moral grounding in an Archimedean point.

The meta-ethical argument is that it is inadequate when returning too little of practical value to the struggles with environmental causes. Environmental pragmatists often suggest rather an approach, which is focused on making relevant contributions to policy or social movements,

rather than delving deeper into the complexities and irresolvable differences of value theory. Rather, they suggest that taking a basis in the myriad intuitions of natural value that are already present and build upon them to cultivate better conduct in the face of urgent environmental problems.

Building on this effort comes my own attempt to expand the horizon of environmental pragmatism. I try to take a systemic viewpoint to ask whether the environmental problems and environmental destructiveness and behaviour may be attacked from different angles than only moral ones. It seems that many are already clear on what needs to be done to avoid environmental destruction, but that there are further systemic, social and psychological obstacles in between, which seems to escape the scope of ethical theory. I suggest that a wider holistic notion of agency which includes higher order hierarchies may be of help in discovering new sources of moral agency that seems unavailable in the atomistic conception of the agent. Further, in the attempt to reveal the obstacles preventing environmental adaption, I argue that empirical human or social sciences may help in forming better models of how behavioural, political and social change is possible from the systemic level, an empirical approach much in line with the empirical aspirations of pragmatism.

In the following text, the terms ‘environmental pragmatism’ and simply ‘pragmatism’ are sometimes used interchangeably. Hopefully, context will reveal the intended sense.

Table of Content

1 Background:

How are we to understand the lacking success of the environmental movement?

Only about 50 years since the benchmark publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, environmental philosophy has developed to an astounding level of complexity and sophistication. Being not only one of the youngest independent fields in philosophy, it has also faced the added challenge of continuously adapting to our growing knowledge of environmental issues and the new needs posed to moral theory. When for instance the go-to giants of classical ethics are proving unfruitful outside the context of purely human subjects, theory has had to be recast in order to accommodate the new non-human occupants of the moral community. It has thus had to step outside the comfort zone of its regular theoretical frameworks in order to adjust to the externally given premises of the problems, and an ever-developing empirical understanding of their nature. Rachel Carson's scientific methodology earned pervasive scholarly attention to environmental issues through her work on the ecologically destabilizing effects of chemical pollutants. The emphasis in the philosophical debate, however, has since adjusted in light of changes to our understanding and updated empirical knowledge. In this sense, the debate simply does not enjoy the theoretical freedom and detachment as many other forms of philosophy, as it is forced to navigate in accordance with a developing body of knowledge. Its task, then, is perhaps not to be an independent, self-informed field, but rather to fill out the intellectual gaps as our scientific and empirical knowledge expands. This empirical feature is perhaps something that could worry any philosopher who is tempted to interpret the outside world according to their preconceived a-priori ideas, rather than sculpting their ideas according to the landscape of the outside world. As such, this radically adaptive power of environmental ethics ever since its beginnings has truly been a monument to the continued resilience of philosophy today.

However, the antagonisms of environmental philosophy are far from resolved. Still after 50 years of hard environmental work, disappointingly little appears to be happening in terms of

changed behaviours and policies, and the moral appeals of philosophers and environmentalists to change actions appear to fall consistently on deaf ears. As global ecological and environmental conditions spiral ever more rapidly towards irredeemable damage for generations to come, many theorists are now raising questions to why environmentalists are unable to exert the necessary counterforce to the development. Currently, deep-rooted detrimental forces thrust forward at a speed far outdoing that of their countermeasures. As environmental NGOs, pro-environmental policy and pro-environmental opinion are indeed gaining impetus every day, they seem to follow incremental, rather than logarithmic growth patterns that is needed to grow sufficiently forceful. Being still regarded on par with myriad other charitable or ideal causes, the critical mass of a global breakthrough seems still far in the horizon for any widespread drastic change to occur within the projected timeframes before pervasive damage gets irredeemable.

While environmental philosophy, with its increasing attention devoted to it in philosophy, is indeed also a successful field in terms of its increasing theoretical development, its progress measured as an applied practical field seem rather bleak. Also, as forceful climate commitments consistently escape top political summits, individual environmental awareness even seems to decline world-wide (Tangeland, 2013; Twenge, Keith, & Freeman, 2012). Perhaps predictably so? Following Garrett Hardin's game theoretical perspective with the Tragedy of the Commons (2008a), success might not only be a question of speaking environmental moral messages quantitatively louder, but also to hit the right approach qualitatively. If certain issues are inherently systemic, as according to Hardin, political social engineering seems more adapt than the overwhelmingly individual moral mobilization of today in breaking these patterns. At any rate, when previous approaches are not working something needs to be changed, it seems, and the movement needs to be scrutinized to find the source of its shortcomings.

In light of these shortcomings, environmental philosophers are faced with many questions: Why is the global breakthrough of the environmental movement taking so long? And perhaps more importantly: Why has environmental philosophy, as dealing with the most fundamental perceptions and approaches to environmental issues, not played a greater role in guiding this breakthrough? Can its suggestions make claims to be bringing about the large-scale social, political and infrastructural changes necessary? Is philosophy today in any way connected to the movement of environmentalism at all? To the extent that the environmental movement represents the muscles, environmental philosophy should most definitely be the brains. Given

this fundamentality to the essential framing of environmental questions, it seems strange that it should not play a greater role to the way we conduct our response. Rather, environmental philosophers today are in fact barely visible in the public environmental debate outside of its narrow academic circles.

As pointed out by Ben Minteer, compared to other fields such as bioethics, environmental philosophy and ethics seem hardly ever noted at all by politicians and environmental lawmakers (2012, p. 3). In bio-ethics, philosophical theory is well established as an applied discipline and constitutes a theoretical basis for real life choices within bio-research. There is a strong connection between the abstractly theoretical and the practically concrete constituents of this field. Oddly enough, his relationship does not seem to be nourished between environmental philosophy and *its* practical counterpart in environmental decision-making. If we admit that environmental ethics, like bio-ethics, also contains a practical mission beyond that of its purely theoretical mission, it may seem like its procedures are in need of adjustment once more to fill this practical side of the equation; and if comparable to the role of bioethics, it hardly seems the case that any *other* discipline may take its place in guiding fundamental perceptions in way we approach its subject. It seems to me that a large responsibility then rests on the shoulders of environmental philosophers and ethicists to try and conceive of theoretical understandings at the fundamental level which may ultimately *be of help* in leveraging environmental progress not only in philosophy, but on the concrete material ground-level. I suggest we follow Marx, if in nothing else, then in his famous aphorism that philosophy should not only try to interpret the world, it should also try to change it.

Some are more reserved towards such a proposed mission for philosophy, stating that its job at best is to observe from the sideline and discover true statements about its field of inquiry, and not itself to get involved to *make* certain true. Sure enough, this appears to have been the rule in the history of philosophy. However, like bio-ethics, the importance and relevance of environmental ethics seem to hinge strongly on the reality and urgency of the problems with which it is concerned. Minteer reminds us of what sparked the movement for the beginning:

> "If this seems an unfair standard for evaluating an academic discipline, especially a branch of philosophy (which often measures itself by its ability to transcend the affairs of daily life), we should remember that a major part of the justification of the field when it formed in the 1970s was to provide a focused philosophical response to society's environmental problems.'(2012, p. 1)

Clearly, no one can be forced to abandon their projects solely because there might be other 'more important' pursuits. As critics of utilitarianism have long noted, if doing anything less than that of optimal utility is impermissible, most aspects of everyday lives will fall short of the requirement (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2014). This dispute on the task and boundary of philosophy, however, I think relies quite heavily, but also quite simply on the tacit underlying questions we set for our inquiry. Considering philosophy not as pre-given program, but rather only as a form of inquiry like sciences or arts defined without regards for its content, we might allow ourselves a different approach. For ethics, particularly, the usual premise of inquiry has been some version of the question regarding *what* it is we ought to do. Still, an equally pertinent question, if we realize we may pose it, can be a subtly different one, wiz. *how* we can do what we ought to do. For in the field of ethics and environmental ethics specifically, the problem is not so much that we have no general ideas of what should be done. We mostly *know* we should employ sustainable and fair practices while avoiding over-consumption, pollution and depletions[1] – but still it seems we do not know *how* to make ourselves do those things consistently. We systematically find ourselves and others doing the opposite. Many times, it does not seem there is a real choice. Even when wanting to do the better thing, there may arise an inner conflict in which the close and particular always overpowers the remote and ideal. We want to use the car less, but we need to get to work on time. We want to support animal welfare but organic farming products are expensive. The house always wins, it seems. Furthermore the average repertoire of what individuals can do that matters is limited, which further increases the bar to a point where most people could feel rather helpless. As long as individual costs of choosing environmentally are high, but big scale benefits are minute, selfless environmental rationality is bound by design to fail to self-interested rationality.

There seems to be an abundance of such game-theoretical aporias like that of the prisoner's dilemma inherent in the structure of the problems (Ariansen, 1992, pp. 86–95), but such analysis almost categorically escapes the scope of environmental ethics which is concerned only with

[1] More on the converging practical agreements among philosophers in chap. 2.5

the normative dimensions of the first-person perspective. When for instance the United States Senate famously refused to ratify the 1997 Kyoto protocol, the reasons provided were heavily concerned with how many *other* nations that signed as well (Gonya, 2010). If not all other major nations like India and China were to sign first, it seemed to make no sense that the United States should do so.

This is analogous to other historical stalemates, like the arms-race of the Cold War, where the question was not *if* it should be stopped, as much as it was *how* it could be stopped. Both parties would agree to the former, as neither is better off with the situation. However, they found themselves locked in a systemic pattern of continuous terror balance. It is almost as if there is a collective weakness of will at play, where we as the human species are now largely aware of the predicaments of environmental issues, but are unable to break the pattern of our collective behaviour causing them. If anything is to be learned by weakness of will cases and by philosophy at all, it is that human actions depend not in a simplistic manner only on knowing what the right actions would be. It depends also on knowing the means to *achieving* such actions, and possessing the recourses to break free of whatever forces pushing us in the opposite direction. We need then to think in terms of what tools may be provided to achieve such a result. As with anything, it is not enough to know the goal, if we do not know how to get there. Not only, then, must we inquire into the exact ethical rules we should employ, but also into the conditions under which such rules are followed. If ethics, most fundamentally, can be seen as such a tool for the improvement and management of human conduct, this second part of the equation – the question of *how* – seems at least equally important to the mission of ethics. The business of ethics should then consist not only in insisting on its own ethical recommendations, but also with inquiring into how ethics may broaden its own field of impact, and in asking how people can otherwise be made consistently more liable to choose better. As long as philosophers are to be taken seriously about contributing valuable analysis to the environmental cause, they must also facilitate the passage from the theoretical down to the practical to close the circuit of their contribution.

Currently, however, ethical theory in environmental philosophy seem only very rarely concerned with strategy and its own impact in the world it attempts to influence. Rather it seems focused on refining its theories further in a perpetual dispute between relatively small theoretical differences (Minteer & Manning, 2000). Admittedly, ethical theoretical differences matter, as they pose competing ethical claims. Still, there must also come a time when

agreement is sufficient to start common platforms for action and practice. In this particular case, time is also an issue. If we are right to question the narrow scope of environmental philosophy's perceived mission, as previously argued, then environmental programs should be advised – perhaps obligated – to focus less on the theoretical justification of values, and more on the real implementation of such values on a systemic and grand scale.

However, the increasing directness and urgency of the problems appear to be accompanied by ever more indirect and abstract approaches in the philosophical discussions, often inclined towards wilderness and romanticized 'typical' nature as such, but in part downplaying the intricate dynamics of the human component and the human-nature relationship to which the pathology is universally ascribed.[2] After being entrenchments into the myriad of schisms of today, this distance to the real physical objects of these theories may only seem greater. The concrete issues we face in everyday life, like those of climate change, energy, production, sustainable development, species preservation, or animal welfare all seem remote to the dealings on this approach, and bonds to any ultimate goal of real life problem-solving may often appear to have been broken entirely in today's debate. The theoretical goals of environmental philosophy seem rather to have taken on a life of their own now increasingly disjoined from the embedded practical goals of the environmental movement as such. The imperative in environmental ethics to refine value theory may seem primary to whether or not real people entertain such values. If such claims about it are tenable, it reveals a self-understanding in environmental philosophy as self-informed and closed off from the world, rather than the open, adjustable and scientifically informed conception previously drawn.

That the debate has taken this turn away from the applied and concrete at the present moment should give reason for concern, as the very problems occasioning the debate in the first place seem to intensify with the same rate as the waning of practical philosophical ambition. This addressing of real issues through the indirect and abstract is not to say that environmentalism is on the decline within philosophy – on the contrary, it is rapidly gaining momentum – but it might be growing increasingly internalized and self-contained. If environmental philosophy does carry the responsibility to make a difference to the problems with which it is concerned its theoretical goals need to be ultimately reducible to practical goals. If the justification of

[2] Examples including such authors as J. Callicott, H. Rolston III, T. Ragan, P. Taylor or A. Næss: 'Despite the variety of positions in environmental ethics developed over the last thirty years, they have focused mainly on issues concerned with wilderness and the reasons for its preservation' (Brennan & Lo, 2011).

environmental philosophy is more heavily qualified than other self-justifying fields, it may seem that it is failing one of its quintessential tasks, and is once again in need of further adaptation to fit the demands of the situation. The previous shift in ethical theory may be called a pragmatic one, in the sense that it responded to a discovered hole in the previous models. Ethics in the form of environmental ethics adjusted accordingly by supplementing theory to accommodate the new non-human inhabitants of the moral community. It seems clear now, however, that given the arguably suboptimal protection of environmental philosophy measured as its ability for crisis respondence, it seems time for a second update in light of the *new* discoveries thus far, and our experience with the current models. Upon learning that the patients of ethics are still inadequately protected in the sense that ethical theory has done little to stop environmental destruction, philosophers should once again be prepared to adjust the structure of their theories to gain better performance in relation to its objects of protection. Some might contend that a certain degree of falsifiability is needed if environmental philosophy should have any prospect of improvement. Perhaps philosophers must then be prepared to kill their philosophical darlings and proceed designing their theories according to empirical correspondence, rather than internal consistency.

At the same time, however, there are indications that environmental philosophy is approaching an end of its juvenile years, and now stabilizing in certain defining ways. Its approaches, though initially reacting to the philosophical orthodoxies of the time, are in some ways themselves corroborated to orthodoxy, making reorientations progressively difficult. Fixed understandings of environmental philosophy's most recurring themes like *intrinsic value* and *non-anthropocentrism* seem to have become defining to the discipline to the point of some theoreticians claiming it a methodological dogmatism (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 2). This fraiming seems to lay the premises of the discussions much in the same way that classical pre-environmental ethics were defined by *its* canonical themes. As even the starkest dissidents to the paradigmatic mainstream will know, few as they are, there is no way around its language and concepts, such as the value discussion or the metric of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism (Weston, 1996a).

The current swing of the pendulum should come as no surprise. According to Colorado professor Katie McShane, the historical backdrop of anthropocentric ethics led many theorists to agree with J. Baird Callicott that 'how to discover intrinsic value in nature is the defining problem of environmental ethics'(2009). Similarly, as cited by McShane, Tom Ragan writes:

‘Only by meeting these theoretical criteria [of non-anthropocentric inherent value] can we arrive at an ethic of the environment, rather than an ethic for the use of the environment’(McShane, 2009). These attitudes towards the central task of environmental philosophy follow in the tracks of Richard Sylvan (b. Routley) and his challenge to classical theory, pointing to the inadequacy of the *basic chauvinism principle*, i.e of anthropocentrist ethics. In his 1973 ‘Last Man example’, which has served a vital role to the formation of environmental philosophy in its current form, he outlines the thought experiment of the last man on earth, showing how the destruction of the whole world and everything in it would imply no moral fault, according to conventional ethics, as long as such destruction poses no adverse effects to human beings. The example was effective to show how such an act still conflicts with central moral intuitions about the inherent value of nature, intuitions which could not be accounted for by way of regular human centered ethics (Sylvan, 2003). Ben Minteer notes: ‘[I]t certainly did not take long for the embrace of nonanthropocentrism (and the denunciation of moral humanism) to become the default position in environmental ethical writing’ (2006, p. 191). Examples of today’s main schools in the debate of environmental philosophy and ethics such as biocentrism, ecocentrism, or deep ecology, all clearly exemplify this deep affinity with ethical non-anthropocentrism and the independent intrinsic value of non-human nature.

In their Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy overview article on environmental ethics, Yeuk-Sze Lo and Andrew Brennan include some remarks on these paradigmatic features of environmental philosophy:

> ‘[These] theories all seem to have one view in common: that anthropocentrism is at the heart of the problem of environmental destructiveness. If anthropocentrism is the problem, then perhaps non-anthropocentrism is the solution’(2011).

They proceed to identify two central tenants of modern environmental philosophy:

(1) «The evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism», which is «the claim that natural non-human things have intrinsic value, i.e. value in their own right independent of any use they have for others».
(2) «The psycho-behavioural thesis of non-anthropocentrism» which is the often unspoken assumption that «people who believe in the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism are more likely to behave environmentally […] than those who do not» (Brennan & Lo, 2011).

Given these assumptions of contemporary environmental philosophy, the conclusion seems to follow that we should promote the case of non-anthropocentrism in order to counteract the destructive behaviours informed and caused by anthropocentrism. However, if either of these assumptions would prove in any way vulnerable, so seems the whole edifice built upon its structure: And predictably, according to increasing objections from some critics in the field, they are.

On the first assumption of environmental ethics, some emerging theorists like Bryan Norton, Andrew Light or Ben Minteer, argue that the indispensability ascribed to the notion of intrinsic value is not necessarily justified given what the notion is invoked to accomplish. Suspicions against its necessity or even usefulness in the literature, seen as a provider of justification to environmental protection and caution, is further increased by the lack of a unified and clear operational conception, as unravelling ontological and epistemological discussions continue to obscure its exact content. According to authors such Anthony Weston, ascribing the lead role in environmental ethics to these seemingly straightforward notions has inadvertently caused their theoretical content to expand through the long technical debates, increasing their distance to their first spontaneous uncomplicated sense. Several problems with their role as moral grounding for environmental philosophy has then arisen.

Firstly, according to Weston, the precise sense of intrinsic value (and thus also of non-anthropocentrism which depends upon it) is unclear as it is filled with varying, and highly

specific metaphysical content throughout the literature, even though it is often taken as fundamental and unproblematic (Weston, 1996a, p. 287). Secondly, it fails in either case to capture the differences in real acts of valuing, and can rarely be applied informatively to particular people or instances. It should be safe to claim that individuals very rarely will invoke unambiguously anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric justifications for their actions, as they are very rarely informed by such abstract and systematic moral principles. Rather we are likely to find they entertain a variety of moral intuitions that are not necessarily reducible to any particular set of academically formalized ethics. If real-life moral processes are ill captured by theory, conceptions of moral relationships as built upon idealized conceptions of human agency could be problematic. In analyzing the moral relationships that hold between two parts, both parts must be accurately captured for conclusions to be true. If they are not, we must argue that the theories are in a bad position to enable better practices – even if evaluative statements regarding one part are correct.

As an extension of this, we might find that the very concepts of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism in themselves must be modified from being seen as sharply contrasted and mutually distinguishable, to being seen with soft edges and as coming in degrees. If the literal sense of anthropocentrism really implies denying any type of human independent value in non-human entities whatsoever, we easily end up in extreme absurdities that apply to none of the intended targets. Arguably, very few fit the description 'anthropocentrist' if taken as total moral disregard for non-human interest (who would be willing to torture animals, say). When as many as 97 % of responders in an American survey consider themselves animal lovers, L. Pippa Callanan argues that 'Americans nearly universally attribute intrinsic value to the nonhuman world' (2010). Equally very few fit the description 'non-anthropocentrist' if taken as *equal* moral regard for humans as to non-humans that possess moral standing. Even Paul Taylor's radical egalitarian biocentrism seems do dissolve under this view if taken in the extreme as meaning that human inherent worth is *equal* to, and deserve the same moral protection as that of say mosquitoes or tulips. Such views on the absolute requirements of a non-anthropocentrism (which, to be clear, do exist) may at times seem to lend themselves to other radical movements such as 'Earth First!' or some of its members, like radical Finish naturalist Pentii Linkola advocating 'rapid population decline' and environmental genocide. Deontological views are known to collapse under extreme consequences, meaning that their absolutist aspirations, just as the categorical understanding of the difference between anthropocentrism, and non-anthropocentrism might be dismissed first hand. This means that anthropocentrism, if it should

be meaningful, must apply to some people even if they admit some inherent value to non-human entities, and non-anthropocentrism must be granted to some people who deny that humans have equal moral significance as non-humans. But then where goes the line? Even Paul Taylor, despite his denial of human superiority, has devised an intricate system of principles for resolving conflicts of interest which utilizes both a wide and human-favoring notion of what it means to have 'basic interests' and the right to take other life on the grounds of 'self subsistence'. If he admits ever being willing to prioritize the life of a human being over the life of any non-human being, it seems he has conceded that his non-anthropocentrism is not in fact absolute in ascribing equal 'worth' to one as the other (cf. Taylor, 2011, pp. 129, 256–280). Further, as the content of non-anthropocentrism is philosophically complex and unclear in its own right, largely committed to the particular understanding of intrinsic value employed, Anthony Weston makes the case that the line between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism is more blurred and problematic than often assumed (Weston, 1996a).

Firstly, as the seemingly clear-cut distinction is investigated, he finds that there are many term 'anthropocentism' is more ambiguous than what is previously assumed (Norton, 2003, p. 164). The core notion of 'human centeredness' as such is more ambiguous as usually assumed, as also pointed out by Eugene Hargrove who claims anthropocentrism simply means 'human centered' or 'seeing from the standpoint of a human being' (Hargrove, 2003, p. 175). We see that 'centeredness' as such may have a number of possible meanings, for instance (1) that all entities within a defined border of values have intrinsic value and moral standing, and none outside of it do, which is the most common understanding. (2) That the center of value is where values are the strongest, although there may be weaker values outside the center. (3) That the value of entities outside the center of value are derived from their *resemblance* to those inside the circle. (4) The descriptive notion that any understanding of value presupposes a point of view from which hermeneutical interpretation of other values must begin (without demanding such values be fundamentally similar).

. d also problems connected to the fact that *non*-anthropocentrism inherently takes its very meaning from its proclaimed opposite, being inherently defined through the same conceptual framework as that which it seeks to abolish, something which would seem to tie the two closer together, rather than disconnecting them (Weston, 1996a, p. 143). Even to those harboring strong affiliations to Taylor's respect for nature and who spontaneously identify with the same humility as non-anthropocentrists in their repulsion toward the typical human chauvinism

towards nature, may find that the notion of strong egalitarianism and equal inherent worth between, say, mosquitoes and human beings is by all accounts morally absurd. Such a position may sound equally extreme and unreal as one which offers absolutely no moral considerability to the suffering of any non-human animal or to the massive annihilation of species or ecosystems whatsoever. Kelly Parker apply puts this point thus: 'Blind anthropocentrism has deplorable consequences for the non-human world, but a blindly misanthropic ecocentrism is no less deplorable' (1996, p. 33). If we can allow such reservations as mentioned above in a non-antropocentric view, we must further ask the question of how much *inequality* we may fit before tipping the scale. Norton famously suggests instead that a 'week anthropocentrism' may well take the place of non-anthropocentrism as an 'adequate environmental ethic' (Norton, 2003). In any case, as Hargrove argues; as long as human beings are doing the valuing, we are inextricably trapped in a human-centered ethic in so far as we are exercising our valuing of nature form a human point of view. Epistemologically, then, it will be impossible to extract the human element from ethics sufficiently to qualify as a truly 'nature centered' ethic.

The second assumption of environmental ethics, the assumption of the behavioural thesis, authors like Anders Biel hold that this is far too simplistic a model of human moral behaviour. According to such critics, the approach of the psycho-behavioural thesis commits to the long replaced belief-desire model of action, which reveals an obsolete idea of the complex psychological and social dynamics underpinning environmental action and moral belief. Many philosophers and interdisciplinary scholars as for example Biel, Murray Bookchin or Slavoj Zizek call for such large scale institutional perspectives in determining the systemics of environmental behaviour. If moving focus from the individual normative level to the societal descriptive level, we may avoid the moral reductionisms of understanding behaviour purely in terms of conscious free willed moral action. Norton raises concerns that anthropocentrism within this frame is only part of the problem, or even perhaps merely a symptom of it, and that even if it were the real source, environmental philosophers are not approaching it correctly in order to change it.

In this thesis I wish to engage this discussion through an investigation of two of the main exponents of such criticisms – the first being known as *environmental pragmatism*, and the

second what I will refer to as *environmental systematism*. The chapter on environmental pragmatism answers largely to the evaluative thesis through its discussions of inherent value, and its necessity in the debate. The chapter on systematism answers to the psycho-behavioural thesis, and expounds on some of its problematic features as a fundamental background of popular conclusions in environmental philosophy, seen from a psychological and system oriented perspective. Ultimately, I wish to show that both assumptions of environmental philosophy are untenable and that environmental philosophy needs to reorient itself insofar as it is based upon the two assumptions. as bearers of the philosophical approach, and that environmental debate should in order to becomme practically feasible and consistent with the major discoveries of empirical research.

2 Environmental pragmatism

Common ethical platforms based on knowledge and agreement

2.1 What is environmental pragmatism?

Apart from the environmental thinking of the early pragmatists such as John Dewey, environmental pragmatism is a recently appearing position, that took form in the 1990s following seminal papers written by Anthony Weston (1996b) and Andrew Light . It has secured a few, but prominent supporters such as Bryan Norton, Kelly Parker, Peter Wenz, Mark Sagoff, Ben Minteer and others, who have been decisive to shaping the movement under a common banner. Inspired by the American pragmatist tradition, it seeks to steer discussions in environmental philosophy in more practically oriented, and less theoretically confined directions. They have argued that after over 50 years of intense but seemingly ineffectual work on the part of environmentalism and environmental philosophy, the time has come to raise the question of whether their impact can be improved, and to reassess the way the topic is approached so that more results can be seen in terms of concrete and effective behavioural and political change. Therefore, they conclude that environmental philosophers need to ask what would be adequate to a workable and realistic ethic that may plausibly be applied and adopted on a large scale, rather than attempt to achieve philosophical certainty. In their pioneering 1996 anthology on environmental pragmatism, Andrew Light and Eric Katz quote Mark Sagoff, saying:

> [We] have to get on without certainty; we have to solve practical, not theoretical problems; and we must adjust the ends we pursue to the means available to accomplish them. Otherwise, method becomes an obstacle to morality, dogma the foe of deliberation, and the ideal society we aspire to in theory will become a formidable enemy of the good society we can achieve in fact. (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 2)

Its proponents maintain that environmental philosophy and ethics should reassess its role to the outside world and its concrete environmental problems, and regain a sense of the materiality and concreteness of the issues that first sparked environmental philosophical debate. They channel the worry of many environmental philosophers that philosophy is growing increasingly

irrelevant to environmental polity or social action (Minteer, 2006, p. 2). Therefore, they wish in various ways to redefine the goals of the movement as informed by the problems of the precarious environmental situation, rather than to elaborate further on intricate sets of theoretical subtleties in a debate that seems mostly of interest only to philosophers in the field. In the words of Ben Minteer it is the 'choosing policy pragmatism over philosophical purity, democracy over dogma, and impact over ideology' (2012, p. 3). Analogous to the function of other applied disciplines like medical ethics, business ethics or engineering ethics, environmental ethics should also be mounted on a principle of practical application so that it can be used to better understand and manage the particular dynamics and processes within its field of inquiry. As we move deeper into the 21st century, the importance and justification of the field should be increasingly placed with its status as a tool in addressing increasingly acute environmental issues, a role we should see trumping philosophical and intellectual functions, however much merit they have in themselves.

One of the main reasons for the introduction of pragmatism in environmental philosophy, according to Anthony Weston, is to address what he calls the abstractness of the current theoretical landscape of values.(Weston, 1996b, p. 288) Like their namesake and ancestor in American pragmatism, environmental pragmatists argue that the function of theory is not ultimately to model objective reality or attain metaphysical 'truth', but rather to act as a tool for practise and precise problem solving. It picks up an instrumental approach to ethical theory in following William James stating that 'Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas in which we can rest'(1907, Lecture II). The pragmatic notion of truth, as James quotes Peirce, advocates an understanding of 'belief' as primarily 'rules for action' and 'truth' as the answer to the question: 'In what respects would the world be different [to us] if this alternative or that is true?' (James, 1907, Lecture II).

Many of the differences in today's debate are in fact not traceable in differences of action, neither politically, socially nor consumptively, argue environmental pragmatists.[3] Thus pragmatists stress the primacy of practise over theory, invoking the classical pragmatist notion of truth as regarding the primary content of theory in terms of its practical impact in the world if it were true, and dismissing metaphysical speculation without the potential to make a difference to possible experience. In rejecting the traditional philosophical quest for truth in its regular sense, they take to what they consider the more relevant question of function. Stressing

[3] More on this in 2.5 on Bryan Norton's convergence hypothesis.

that the real measure of scientific or philosophical success is not the internal rigidity, cf. 'truth' of its theoretical content, but how well its theory makes accurate predictions and enables efficiency in bringing about its declared goals.

This new group under the label environmental pragmatism accordingly sets out to criticize conventional approaches to 'environmental philosophy for its lack of practical orientation as an applied discipline. They often engage not in the concrete philosophical arguments of most environmental philosophers, as conventionally addressing their internal philosophical qualities to ask whether or not they are true, but takes a meta-philosophical stance to critique the very framing in which such arguments are made. They conclude that the focus of their inquiry should lie elsewhere, given that a major premise of its existence is the onset of the environmental crisis, and that it should not consider itself a detached and disinterested theoretical discipline to be extricated and matured over long periods of time in the same manner as most other fields of philosophy.[4] Pragmatists promote pluralistic, interdisciplinary and empirical approaches in the attempt to overcome the perceived stagnation suffered by environmental programs. They wish to strive for a focused unity in the efforts of environmental philosophers, rather than the self-defeating entrenched battles over practically insignificant nuances and fixed ideological fundamentals, encouraging representatives of different views rather to join in cooperation directing their energy outwards rather than at each other regarding pressing environmental concerns. Environmental pragmatism is the worry that most environmentalists or any other audience may find it difficult to get involved in, let alone to endorse the specific abstract contents of modern philosophical theories of non-instrumental natural value. However, it argues that it should not throw the baby out with the bathwater, but rather keep others included, even if uninformed on, or reluctant towards, specific theories of value.

Among the key strategies of environmental pragmatists lies in this pluralism that seeks to identify what unifies environmentalists rather than what divides them, and promoting a focussed and coordinated pursuit of common goals. Minteer and Manning state how the movement emerged resulting from the limits of moral monism: '[a] growing number of

[4] Indeed some argue that environmental philosophers need not be normatively motivated by interests in environmental causes at all, but they may be regarded a marginal group. (Cf. Laplante, 2004)

environmental ethicists have become dissatisfied with the limits of monistic philosophy as the paradigmatic operating mode in the field.'(Minteer & Manning, 2003, p. 319)

An important part of the unifying efforts of pragmatic pluralism relies on questioning the validity of common dividing theoretical dichotomies. Environmental pragmatists often argue that the classical abstract distinctions made in environmental theory seldom answer sufficiently to the real and dynamic objects in the real world that such abstractions are meant to model. They point out that the distinction between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism, for instance, a distinction made absolutely fundamental to the proceedings of environmental ethics, oftentimes appears less protruding when projected onto people in the real world. Norton expresses best such reluctance to fuel the common schisms and dichotomies created by theoretical abstractions:

> [T]he book is sceptical of grand dichotomies, which are so often the fellow-travelers of intuitive, a priori knowledge. Grand dichotomies, as John Dewey recognized at the turn of this century, thrive only in ivory towers; when held up against the real world, they do not fit, and are tumbled about and scratched. Underneath, one usually finds a continuum with an oversimplification superimposed. (1994, preface; x)

Environmental pragmatists often suggest that the framing of the environmental crisis within contemporary non-anthropocentric models takes an overly simplified or polarized form. Most environmental philosophers frame the mission of the field in breaking with the previously anthropocentric paradigm in ethics, arguing that the task is to overturn what is still the default morality throughout most of the world. However, environmental pragmatists wish to challenge the notion of anthropocentrism as a valid description for the applicability of this grand dichotomy between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism as an absolute divide of all possible moral attitudes towards nature. There seems to be two questions that need affirmative answering before anthropocentrism warrants its current role in the debate. Firstly, can we define anthropocentrism sharply in contrast to non-anthropocentrism, and second, do most people in that case really fall into this category, such that the non-anthropocentric appeal hits the intended mark? The pragmatist answer is that the category is ill-defined, and that even if it were not, most people would likely not fit the description like it is intended.

Environmental pragmatists like Weston argue that the dichotomy is false, and reductive in relation to the vast diversity and complexity of real moral attitudes (1996b). If positions[5] and attitudes are diverse and irreducible to a single consistent and unified attitude, as Weston suggests, then in practise most people would seldom come out at one determinate point or the other on the question of anthropocentrism. Even if based against the most naïve criteria of admitting some sort of independent value in nature, we will likely find that most people minimally fulfil the criteria in one way or another already in valuing nature for its own sake. If this is the case, the theoretical map does not fit with the landscape and the models applied should be recalibrated. Arguably, very few people across the world will think that harming or inflicting pain to animals unnecessarily is morally permissible, or that the richness and diversity of living species in themselves are completely outside the domain of moral considerability. We my for instance note how many nations (although not enough) have already passed animal rights or welfare legislation, such as in Norway, where it is asserted that 'animals have intrinsic value independently of human instrumental value'[6] ("Dyrevelferdsloven § 3," 2009). However, if most people are *mostly* anthropocentric in their valuations of nature (or at least in their unconditional priority of human over non-human interests) the naïve criteria does not seem to be enough to capture what is meant, and the distinction must be qualified further to capture the intended sense. However, *some* priority to human over non-human interests is normally permissible within non-anthropocentric systems. Profound respect and non-instrumental valuing of nature is still not only possible, but highly prevalent both amongst those who are uninformed by value theory, or even those who disagree with non-anthropocentric monistic theories of value in nature.

A hallmark of many of these theorists is also to cast doubt around the a priori approaches with which environmental philosophy has been conducted, as is particularly visible in the scepticism around the fortified position of value-theory and the anthropocentrism in today. As inspired from the classical pragmatists such as William James, a prominent feature of environmental pragmatism is its empirical feature. Alongside its pluralistic aspirations which call for mutual interdisciplinary collaboration, a salient aspect of such collaboration must take place on empirical grounds in the mutual exchange of information informing of related sciences in most

[5] 'Positions' is a fairly ambitious term to apply to laypeople across the world, as 'pre-reflective dormant intuitions or attitudes' of varying theoretical consistency and strength is probably more accurate.
[6] My translation.

accurately and scientifically capturing the mechanics of environmental processes, and the nature of human environmental detrimental behaviour.

2.2 Historical roots

As the constitution and unity of 20th century pragmatism is a wide and difficult topic in its own right, the business of fleshing out baselines for an *environmental* pragmatism of the 21st century would seem to be complicated further, as it takes its inspiration from a vast and uncharted line of intellectual history. This might occasion a proper glance at environmental pragmatism in its historical context and the proprietary ideas of its predecessors. As pointed out in the preface of Light and Katz' 1996 anthology on environmental pragmatism, the current developments and discussions in the field originate from a broad spectrum of philosophical perspectives. They claimed in 1996 that environmental pragmatism has emerged in at least four forms, which is now almost twenty years ago (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 5). This is much in tune with the generic pluralism of pragmatism, even if pragmatists (such as Norton in particular (1994)) often stress the importance of unity and a common platform in developing effective environmental solutions. It seems that even if pluralism is among the key elements of pragmatism, a large degree of controversy regarding its role still subsists. Whether or not these two elements are contradictory will not be dealt with here, but suffice it to say that the label of 'environmental pragmatism' is a dramatically diverse term, drawing its inspiration from an unruly intellectual territory. In fact, Light and Katz believe that 'environmental pragmatism as such is primarily a strategy for approaching environmental philosophy and environmental issues – it more accurately refers to a cluster of related and overlapping concepts, rather than to a single view' (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 5). In this respect, it reflects a diversity seen in many other lines of thought that are collected under a common name merely by virtue of family likeness, rather than through the minimal set of shared features of a pre-defined program. If, as for instance Ben Minteer argues, environmental pragmatism is defined through its common inspiration by the American pragmatists, it suffices to point out that such a point of reference is also not a fixed point as it in many respects is as diverse as the position to be defined in the first place. Such a lack of defined unity is sometimes seen as a sign of immaturity in the literature, most explicitly

by Bryan Norton[7], assuming it to evolve towards ever greater agreement and internal consistency, rather than to expand further in increasingly diverse directions. Regardless of its development, however, whether diverging or converging, its firmest common denominator today is likely found in its historical roots in classical pragmatism.

The exposition of historical roots for one philosophy based on another must naturally take a two-part turn – one dealing with the history of the philosophy at hand, and one dealing with the philosophy upon which the first one is based.

2.2.1 American pragmatism

The typical story about pragmatism famously takes place in the United States of America, particularly following the works of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), and John Dewey (1859-1952). The term 'pragmatism' caries etymological linkage to words like 'practice' and 'practical' and derives from the Greek πραγμα (*pragma*), translatable to 'action' or 'fact' ("Pragmatism," n.d., "πρᾶγμα," 2013), hence the philosophy's emphasis on matters of practice over those of theory. The pragmatic maxim, as it was later named was originally formulated by Peirce in his Popular Science Monthly article titled 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear' from 1878, but never took hold until being reintroduced by James in 1898, according to James (1907, Lecture II). The famous formulation of Peirce' maxim reads:

> 'Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.' (Peirce, 1878, p. 293)

As among the pillars of pragmatism, belief and truth are, according to James most essentially principles of successful conduct in the world, and represents the attitudes towards the world which will prove the most successful guidance of action. Truth, in this picture, is those beliefs people ought to hold in order to sustain successful conduct. Thus inquiry, as a goal directed teleological conduct receives its normative qualities. It contains an element of desire or want,

[7] '[O]riginary stages are the worst possible times at which to demand that we all speak with one voice. Once a set of values is culturally consolidated, it may well be possible, perhaps even necessary, to reduce them to some kind of consistency.' (cited in: Light & Katz, 1996, p. 5)

in attempting to discover true propositions. *Truth* as a normative notion is inherently bound to action, dictating the correct or successful attitudes towards the world which ought to be held. Truth performs the linkage between the believer and the world around him or her in which he or she acts.

James' series of lectures entitled *Pragmatism – A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* appeared in print in 1907, follows his lectures on pragmatism at Lowell Institute and Columbia University. The pluralistic subtitle immediately brings forth the context of historical continuity which is sought for here. James humbly notes how

> '[t]here is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means.' (James, 1907, Lecture II)

James describes pragmatism as a type of unification between a deep chasm in philosophy that has existed ever since ancient times, and runs deep between the called 'soft' and 'hard temperaments' of philosophers. The first, he explains, tends to be 'rationalistic, idealistic, optimistic, religious, free-willist, monistic, and dogmatical', [8] whereas the other is 'empiricist, sensationalistic, materialistic, pessimistic, irreligious, fatalistic, pluralistic, and sceptical' (James, 1907, Lecture I). James finds that this division is historically epitomized in empiricism and rationalism respectively. However, the likeness of which might be just as easily recognized between the idealism of Plato versus the realism of Aristotle, or as notoriously known today as the rift between so called analytic and continental philosophy. Standing within an empiricist (or analytical) tradition himself, James recognizes the unsatisfying character of both extremes in want of the other; how, bluntly '[e]mpiricism gives facts without religion' and 'Rationalism gives religion without facts' (James, 1907, Contents). Thus James wishes to formulate pragmatism as a mediating system between the two, synthesizing their virtues in a case sensitive and refined form.

The theoretical pluralism which is introduced by James is the attempt to maintain several perspectives where they function best or is most successfully applied:

[8] As we shall later see, these characterizations are the exact same that environmental pragmatists use to describe mainstream environmental thought, cf. Light and Katz' question of 'theoretical dogmatism' (1996, p. 2)

> Most of us have a hankering for the good things on both sides of the line. Facts are good, of course—give us lots of facts. Principles are good—give us plenty of principles. The world is indubitably one if you look at it in one way, but as indubitably is it many, if you look at it in another. It is both one and many—let us adopt a sort of pluralistic monism. Everything of course is necessarily determined, and yet of course our wills are free: a sort of free-will determinism is the true philosophy. (James, 1907, Lecture I)

Diverging descriptions of the same may simultaneously be true under different conditions. Thus, in the spirit of Peirce's essay 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear' (1878), James hopes that many apparently irresolvable conundrums of philosophy may prove to dissolve under the correct application of perspective. Illustrating with an example, he notes how he was once asked to settle a metaphysical dispute concerning a squirrel hiding behind the stem of a tree and a man moving around it trying to see it. When asked whether the man really moved around the squirrel, James explains how the answer should depend on the practical sense of 'moving around':

> If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if on the contrary you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on his left, and finally in front again, it is quite as obvious that the man fails to go round him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away (1907, Lecture II)

This problem solving and problem dissolving character of philosophy is clearly recognizable in the approach of the later environmental pragmatists.

2.2.2 Beginnings of environmental pragmatism

A historical contextualization of environmental pragmatism should perhaps start with a due disclaimer to avoid any impression of a clear continuous heritage from American pragmatism. Although the ideas of particular pragmatists are often adopted by environmental pragmatists, environmental pragmatism is not, unlike for instance neo-pragmatism, built upon any particular cannon or philosopher, and stands in no direct continuous relation or allegiance to classical

pragmatism besides identifying it as the most proper name for their own independent attitudes towards environmental philosophy. Its proponents are firstly environmental philosophers, exploring pragmatic ideas, rather than pragmatists exploring environmental philosophy. It is true that some of these attitudes and fundamental intuitions stand in close relation to those attitudes of the original movement, pragmatism thus developed against the background of current trends in environmental philosophy is quite different from the background of pragmatism at the turn of the last century. As the two started off initially with answering quite different questions to begin with, one might argue that the resemblance of their answers in the end are only coincidental. Philosophical concerns that drove classical pragmatists, as for instance theories of truth, metaphysics, language or logic are not necessarily relevant to the philosophical projects of environmental pragmatists, stressing the importance of practicality and non-redundancy in achieving successful analysis of environmental issues.

For this reason it might rather be regarded an applied instance of select pragmatic principles, as it (rather pragmatically) picks out the components that best fits these environmental needs. Even Peirce himself was skeptical of the notion that philosophy should become practical understood as getting involved in current political and social issues (Bernstein, 1972, p. 201). For one, the coinage of a pragmatic approach to environmental philosophy arose in reaction to the particular form of the dominant monistic non-instrumentalist approaches. It seems clear their motivations differ: Environmental philosophers wanted to solve environmental problems, whereas classical pragmatists wanted to analyze the workings of science and philosophy. If asking environmental pragmatists how they feel about general philosophical questions aside from environmentalism, they may not give pragmatist answers at all. There is no necessary contradiction between *environmental* pragmatism and, say, and the notion of absolute reality and coresponcance theory of truth, although this would be in conflict with classical pragmatism.

A concrete ‘beginning’ of environmental pragmatism as a collective movement is perhaps hard to pinpoint. Several currents which more or less resemble a pragmatism in the environmental enquiry, can be seen at various points in the literature. For instance the deep ecology movement and the writings of Arne Næss display several pragmatic features, such as holism, pluralism, non-fundamentalism and underscoring a looser practice based notion of ethics mounting on situatedness and lifestyle rather than hard moral absolutism (Næss, 1989). Næss’ connections to the logical empiricist movement during the 1940s, onwards, a movement sometimes

considered a philosophical descendant of pragmatism equally sceptical to the practical relevance of metaphysics, further show this relatedness, and how it may be hard to specify the precise boundaries of pragmatism in western philosophical thought. The subtitle of William James' *Pragmatism*, reading 'A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking' (1907) goes to make the same point for classical pragmatism, namely that the currents of pragmatism span well beyond their historical fixation in a defined philosophical school. However, as an explicit philosophical position (or perhaps better, movement) on the environmental scene, environmental pragmatism has arisen from a few select works and authors within the past 30 years.

According to Clare Palmer, the term 'environmental pragmatism' was first employed by Andrew Light in 1992, following a longer independent opting by Antony Weston to adopt a 'pragmatic approach' to environmental ethics in 1985 (Palmer, 2003, p. 32). The literature on the topic has expanded considerably after circa 2005 and onwards, but a few seminal works and authors should be mentioned, such as the 1996 environmental pragmatism anthology edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz, which is frequently cited in the literature and helped establish the term as a recognized position or movement. Anthony Weston, however, is by most considered the father of environmental pragmatism as a movement, in the wake of whom many renowned authors such as Andrew Light, Bryan Norton, Anthony Weston, Kelly Parker, Ben Minteer, Katie McShane or Kristin Schrader-Frechette have all since made considerable contributions.

According to Light and Katz, in their 1996 anthology, environmental pragmatism has emerged in at least four forms:

1. 'Examinations into the connections between classical American philosophical pragmatism and environmental issues;
2. The articulation of practical strategies for bridging gaps between environmental theorists, policy analysts, activists, and the public;
3. Theoretical investigations into the overlapping normative basis of specific environmental organizations and movements, for the purposes of providing grounds for the convergence of activists on policy choices; and among these theoretical debates;
4. General arguments for theoretical and meta-theoretical moral pluralism in environmental normative theory.'(Light & Katz, 1996, p. 5)

These categories are not firm distinctions and are not elaborated upon in Light and Katz' introduction in order to establish a taxonomical system between different approaches. This is also not their intent, as is later made clear. Rather they wish to provide some overview of the most frequent themes appearing in the literature. Many more categories could have been included in the anthology, particularly now, almost 20 years after the anthology's publication. Such might include the meta-philosophical and meta-ethical investigations into the purposes and boundaries of philosophical inquiry; attempts to realign philosophical theorizing with empirical knowledge, and sciences such as moral psychology, sociology, ecology and politics. There are a large degree of difference also among self-declared environmental pragmatists and their emphasis in the debate. Some, like Norton, describe themselves as anthropocentrists (2003), some stress the application of methods from classical pragmatists (Minteer, 2012), some are concened with moving beyond intrinsic value debates and some are preoccupied with developing pragmatic notions of value (Moriarty, 2006). The literature on environmental pragmatism is no doubt diverse and clearly filled with tensions if it is to be understood and analyzed as a single project. We can therefore understand why Light and Katz warn against reading their 1996 anthology as a 'prolegomena to the full development of a coherent normative position in the field of environmental philosophy' (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 15). Rather, as is previously indicated, the category is perhaps best understood through family resemblance rather than an absolute set of shared properties. There is even seems to be mixed opinions among environmental pragmatists as to whether or not they should try to agree more, or whether or this diversity should be regarded good to the health of the field in its own right. When for instance Bryan Norton advocates bringing environmental philosophers theoretically closer, and moving 'towards unity among environmentalists', as is the title of his book, this may be contrary to other proponents of pluralism who see theoretical diversity as a benefit to a healthy movement.

However, the de-polarizing and unifying feature of classical pragmatism is perhaps the most common feature of is one that is often reiterated by modern environmental pragmatism, as for instance by Bryan Norton's attempt to bring unity to environmentalism (1994), or Ben Minteer's so called 'third way' in environmental ethics (2006), bridging a different gap between 'hard' and 'soft' thinking, namely that between conservationism and preservationism, or the polarized anthropocentric vs. non-anthropocentric approaches (Minteer, 2006, p. 1).

As noted previously, one core element of pragmatism remains the abandonment of metaphysical speculation in the search for *truth*.[9] With environmental pragmatists, the question of truth is abandoned, not because they reject truth as a fruitful concept in itself, like the classical pragmatists do, but because they contend that the quest for truth happens to stands in the way of more important goals in the particular field of environmentalism. In the case of classical pragmatism, however, truth is abandoned not because it contingently disrupts a project disjoined from it, but because of the philosophical desire to dissolve intellectual knots that were beyond the reach of regular rational or empirical cognition. If environmental pragmatists did not happen to perceive the truth notion as standing in the way, rather than aiding their project of dissolving environmental problems, many would arguably have little problem with it. In this way, environmental pragmatists are merely cherry-picking from the school of pragmatism, using only that *which works*, pragmatically enough, for the particular purposes, and recognizing that an applied pragmatism in any other field could look quite different given its different goals and initial conditions.

2.3 What is the question of environmental philosophy?

The environmental debate in philosophy stretches further back in the history of philosophy than what can probably be accurately accounted for. A rudimentary discussion of value in nature is arguably seen for instance in Aristotle's teleological concept of virtue according to the self-realization of one's form (Kraut, 2014). This concept notably extends not only to human virtues but also those of every living thing which are a 'teleological center of a life' as Paul Taylor would call it today (2011).

Environmental pragmatists like Minteer and Light argure that given the time that this search for value was begun, it seems likely that its motivational cue is connected with the appearance and discovery of environmental problems. There seems to be a strong causal link between the sudden surge of attention devoted to material environmental concerns, such as pollution,

[9]As understood traditionally by the correspondence theory of truth. Pragmatists do search for 'truth' but in the often employ the pragmatic theory of truth as previously quoted by James.

insustainability, and mass-extinctions, and the sudden desire for an environmental philosophy. It is very difficult to imagine an environmental philosophy booming in such a rapid and sudden fashion at any other time in history, suggesting that the emergence of wide and serious practical environmental challenges constituted the triggering point. such as sustainability and of and It might be that the project of environmental ethics has since changed, or was never unified in the first place. After all, there are no binding normative directives, or clearly defined goals within the movement. However, as for instance Andrew Light argues, the very historical reason that a pervasive recognition of inherent value in nature was so desperately needed at the was the fact that without it humans would seem even more psychologically bent on the path to destroying nature.

> 'My rationale is this: If the original reason that philosophers established this field was to make a philosophical contribution to the resolution of environmental problems (consistent with other professionals' response to environmental concerns in the early 1970s), then the continuation – indeed the urgency – of those problems demands that philosophers do all they can to actually help change present policies and attitudes involving environmental problems. If we talk only to each other about value theory, we have failed as environmental professionals.' (Light, 2003, p. 399)

If this is the case, a short circuit may have been made from the strong instrumental role of this search to its adoption as the sole purpose of environmental philosophy itself. Naturally, however, no argument from whatever motivations were drawn upon in the past can be applied as justification for the goals philosophers ought to be pursuing today. If anything, such arguments usually serve the exact opposite, as demonstration of obsolescence and need for fresh thinking. Nevertheless, if the environmental philosophers in the past were indeed differently minded and with different implicit goals, a silent turn must have taken place sometime during the last decades, where what came to be known as 'environmental philosophy' no longer meant the resolution oriented philosophical treatment of questions of sustainability, ecological harmony or consumption management, but rather a metaphysical inquiry of nature philosophy. If this is the case, it seems like the former endeavour was unnoticeably left fallow, while its questions, under the guise of being vigorously debated, in fact remained unanswered.

The reactions to these sorts of compromising positions are diverse. Firstly there seems to be something unsettling about the seemingly consequentialist abandonment of environmental values in the hopes that more can be achieved without them. Something is lost that is not compensated for by the shallow anthropocentric conservationism that may take its place. It may seem firstly that a sustained and effective preservation is indeed dependent not only on a reasoned understanding of actions deemed necessary, but also of an emotional more direct value judgment. The instrumentalist approach seems to be suffering from a version of the hedonic treadmill, that the attempt to maximize certain goals in a strictly instrumental manner tends to be self-defeating and less efficient than if these goals were considered goals in themselves. In the face of the need for tremendous levels of self-regulation, achieving the same sorts of results from the instrumental as from the intrinsic value approach might strike us as extremely difficult on a psychological level. A similar argument is that of risking compromise in our environmental goals, and the lowering of our demands towards that deemed achievable, instead of raising the bar of the achievable towards our goals.

In light of this criticism against the core elements of environmental philosophy, the debate over whether such concerns should be referred to a separate category of environmental philosophy has arisen. Disputes over the 'real' aim of environmental philosophy may seem strange, as this is simply an open question of what philosophers actually *do*. Obviousely, there is no legislative panel or regulative authority in taxonomical matters of philosophy. When philosophers disagree upon the content and meaning of a particular concept, the usual inclination of philosophers is to make distinctions.[10] As for the dispute over the real purpose of environmental philosophy, according to this principle, it should be immediately clear to all that the two sides simply advocate to two separate projects in philosophy in a simple dispute over a single name. The first sees itself mostly as an ontological inquiry over the metaphysical and moral constitution of non-human nature, whereas the other for the most part takes for its project the attempt to apply philosophical thought in the response to environmental problems and a tangible contribution to the solution of such problems. Many authors find the idea of political or popular opinion criteria of success quite awkward when such concerns are simply not their priority. As pointed out by Andrew Light, philosophers in the debate like Eric Katz, are reluctant towards

[10] One of the few methods in which most philosophers agree with William James'

this consequential measure of philosophical validity as a matter of its general and non-academic impact and adoptability:

> At the end, however, Katz may not mind such a limitation of environmental philosophy so much. He begins and ends his paper with an attempt to distance himself, and environmental ethics at large, from necessarily making a contribution to environmental policy. The true test of an environmental ethic, according to Katz is not whether it contributes to a management ethic, or set of polices, but simply whether it is right. (Light, 2002, p. 105)

Katz, despite his contributions to pragmatism, remains with the traditional evaluation of philosophy as judged by argumentative integrity alone, and as justified, as it were, by its philosophical *intrinsic* worth. Whether environmental philosophy carries an ethical duty to provide philosophical contributions towards the resolution of environmental issues remains perhaps an ethical question itself, to which Katz and other opponents of pragmatism answers in the negative. One might argue that even if an appeal to the 'roots' of environmental philosophy would be a misplaced argument from authority, there is still due note to be given the fact that the particular urgency that initially sparked the discipline, and which massively thrusts its motivations today, is indeed owed to the concrete practical reality of the crisis it concerns. For this reason it is difficult to accept this criterion of consequential detachment as suggested by Katz.

Unlike the overwhelming majority of branches in ethics, environmental pragmatists do not measure their success in internal argumentative validity alone, without including the ability of such arguments to take hold in the real world and amount to more than just 'being correct'. They may count their performance rather like a school teacher, who, rather than attributing class results to the performance of the pupils, chooses to see their performance as a measure of her own ability to teach. When an ethical argument fails to take hold, this may just as easily be the fault of the communicator as that of the listener. heard, there may also be

A normative accusation that one project is morally inferior to another on the grounds of being less effective may also sound suspicious in that we would have to demand converts from all other supposed inferior ethical projects as well.

2.4 Intrinsic value in environmental pragmatism

The question of intrinsic value, of what it is, where it comes from and what things possess it, quickly became the Holy Grail of environmental philosophy, and perhaps the one largest source of dispute in the field. Following Richard Sylvan's previously mentioned Last Man thought experiment from 1973 philosophers generally agreed that the task of any environmental ethic, if it is to be distinctive from regular ethics, must be to provide an account of independent value as found in nature analogous to the way conventional ethics grants independent value to persons and human beings. Sylvan's thought experiment harmonized with many, if not most people's moral intuitions to show that we believe non-human nature must have a value in its own right, also in the absence of human beings. The full force of the thought experiment comes when pointing out that these intuitions cannot be adequately accounted for by way of conventional anthropocentric notions of value. It seemed clear to all environmental philosophers that the span of ethical theory which allows only a particular kind of conscious experience (notably that of humans) to be inherently valuable was too narrow to capture the full range of things that intuitively qualified as independent values. Having experienced the counterexample to the absolute truth of anthropocentric ethics, anthropocentrism seemed falsified, demanding its opposite, namely non-anthropocentrism be asserted as true.

For this reason, and surely many more, the intrinsic values in nature, as carrying for a non-anthropocentrism has arguably become the single largest topic of discussion within the field, but according to environmental pragmatists it is also among the most problematic and elusive epistemological frontiers of philosophy.

Different answers to what intrinsic values are, and who or what is to be counted among its hosts, have given rise to a multitude of positions and 'centrisms' aligning with a variety of technical distinctions and spectrums. These positions include, but are not limited to anthropocentrism, fixating value with the human species, zoosentrism, maintaining animals or consciousness as the most general criteria of value; speciescentrism, arriving holisticly with species; biocentrism, at life in general; or ecocentrism, at ecosystems. These are often also divided by the metric of

holism/individualism according to its considered focal point. Speciescentrism, or most notably ecocentrism is firmly categorized within the holistic region, placing value not mainly with the individual but at the more general level of species or ecosystems seen as a distinct organic entity of value above the sum of its parts. Positions such as anthropocentrism, zoocentrism or biocentrism tends to be individually oriented, although not necessarily. Common to them all is how they all seem to search for ultimate value, and expect it to be found, in a single unified place or aspect of nature. They are ethically monistic in the sense of ascribing value to one particular fundamental locus above all others, rather than pluralistic which may allow for several different theories to be true simultaneously or by different degrees in different contexts. Naturally there is also a varying degree of emphasis and priority among the proponents of these positions, sometimes blurring the distinctions. Indeed as seems apparent from the classifications above it might seem difficult and odd to fit our intuitions of value completely within only one category without simultaneously acknowledging the appeal of the other.

While the different positions in the debate are notoriously diverse in identifying the location intrinsic values, they all have intrinsic values in common as their starting point. However, the lexical and metaphysical meaning of this term is also a case of dispute. Initially, intrinsic values are straight forwardly understood as the values of which extrinsic, or instrumental, values are the end. They are the *ends in themselves*, in the classical Kantian phrasing, or the *ultimate* or *final* values that cannot be reduced to, or understood by reference to other values. Katie McShane terms it thus: 'Claims about a thing's intrinsic value are claims about the distinctive way it which we have a reason to care about that thing.' (2007) Some subtly different expressions are also in circulation, like Paul Taylor's 'inherent worth' (2011, p. 71) and Arne Næss who employs 'autotelic value'(2008, p. 225). The two most common, 'intrinsic' and 'inherent' are normally used interchangeably, like with Bill Devall and George Sessions (2008, p. 231). However, 'intrinsic' value is sometimes distinguished form 'inherent' which may be used in a wider sense to indicate merely 'inseparability' of value from the object without the connotation of self-sufficiency. While 'inherent' only suggests an adhering of value to an object from which it cannot be detached, it is not necessarily as strong as 'intrinsic', which marks a coming from, and self-sufficiently residing within, the object without external reference. With a slight sense of caution we may, according to this, understand all intrinsic values to be also inherent values, but not vice versa. Some examples such as tasty food or good health, are commonly valued unconditionally and inherently, but not in their own right, meaning that they are good only in relation to something else, which disqualifies them from being intrinsic. Tasty

food or good health are not ends in themselves, although they are (by most accounts) always good, and thus *inherently* so. There is also a further terminological facet to the literature using 'instrumental' as meaning 'extrinsic' and 'non-instrumental' as meaning 'intrinsic'. Instrumental' and 'non-instrumental' are oftentimes even equated with 'anthropocentric' and 'non-anthropocentric' value respectively. These uses are imprecise, as there can be both instrumental and non-instrumental inherent value (where food or health are examples of instrumental inherent value). Non-instrumental extrinsic values are also possible, such as a good medical test result, which is non-instrumental to any further goal, but still only extrinsically good in its relation to something outside itself (Zimmerman, 2010).

These technical nuances are complex and I will not dive further into them here. For the sake of clarity and simplicity I will use 'intrinsic' in the following to denote the value in question unless otherwise necessary. The above may serve, however, as a precursor to the complexities that may arise from the philosophical value discussion, which may, according to many environmental pragmatists, ultimately warrant their avoidance or even abandonment altogether in the name of simplicity and practical operability. While questions over intrinsic value have been particularly well-grounded in the environmental philosophy debate, environmental pragmatists often presents both theoretical and meta-theoretical reasons for their abandonment.

The theoretical reasons are most often directed at the theoretical framework of intrinsic value upon which conventional environmental ethics is built. This conventional theoretical framework is composed by several common facets that according to pragmatists both reduce the number of acceptable approaches to the crisis, effectively barring the efforts of experimental investigations into non-conventional approaches that may be better adapt at tackling environmental problems. However more importantly it also seems to 'orbit' around the same center of gravity as the opposing anthropocentrized notion of ethics, being defined on its premises. Weston writes that:

> 'If the most rigorous and sustained attempts to transcend anthropocentrism still end up in its orbit, profoundly shaped by the thought and practices of the anthropocentrized culture within which they arise, then we may begin to wonder whether the project of transcending culture in ethical thought is, in fact workable *at all*. Perhaps ethics requires a very different self- conception.' (Weston, 1996a, p. 143)

Richard Watson argues to the same extent that environmental ethics presupposes values in ther most manifestly human form when imagining the value og non-human nature:

> 'What *would* it be, after all, to think like a mountain as Aldo Leopold is said to have recommended? It would be anthropocentric because mountains do not think, but also because mountains are imagined to be thinking which human interests in their preservation or development they prefer.'(Watson, 2008)

ethics that characterizes Anthony Weston argues that the search for an 'achemedian point' in ethics, as proposed by John Rawls… Foundationalism, monism and individualism.

The meta-debate over how what goals environmental philosophers should see for themselves and what questions they should investigate of intrinsic value is one of the main areas of interest to environmental pragmatists. Especially Bryan Norton, who has been particularly vocal in his criticisms of the concept as defining to the environmental movement, argues that the intrinsic value question firstly functions only to stalemate the already entrenched positions in the debate, and secondly of overshadowing other more fruitful discussions. Minteer explains that

> '[Norton] has made a series of arguments over the past twenty-five years that the metaphysical and epistemological weaknesses of the concept demand that we leave it behind as we grapple with the pressing concerns of environmental management and decision making'(2012, p. 57).

Although posing 'metaphysical and epistemological' problems is rarely the decisive mark for dismissing a project on philosophical grounds (usually containing *no* problems at all may equally well cause us to drop it), Norton's and other pragmatist's points are both philosophical and meta-philosophical. McShane sums up the criticism neatly: Firstly, she says:

> 'as Bruce Morito and Anthony Weston have pointed out, the notion that things can possess value independently of the relations they have to other things suggests a peculiarly atomistic picture of the world. The more we learn about our world, the more we see it as made up of things that are interrelated, interdependent, and defined through their relations with other things.' (McShane, 2007, p. 2)

the philosophical critique of intrinsic value claims that are metaphysically fundamental, commensurably unified and complete. Fundamental in the sense that they refer to in nature and fundamentally non-observable or –investigateable in empirical terms. We can note that this is somewhat related to the anti-metaphysical arguments of the often claimed descendents of classical pragmatism, namely the logical empiricists and the Vienna Circle from the 1920s to the 1950s. Secondly, the meta-philosophical, which is Norton's prime concern (Minteer, 2012, p. 59), relates to the commonly perceived mission of environmental philosophy, a mission which following Norton seems to be informing and laying the boundaries of the current approaches of the debate leading to procedural dogmatism and ultimately stagnation and non-adaptation. He contrasts his views with the ethical foundationalism and monism of the current debate and the popular opinion among theorists that the environmental ethics debate necessarily needs to take a non-anthropocentrist monist form in order to qualify as environmental proper in Callicott's or Regan's understanding[11]. To Norton it may have seemed at times that environmental philosophers take their project to crumble in the case of a failure to articulate a coherent, unified, and complete theory of intrinsic value in nature.

However, in the words of my supervisor Arne Johan Vetlesen, intrinsic value is a 'sticky subject'[12] in any type of ethical discourse. Indeed, as even environmental pragmatists spend a good deal of time discussing why we *shouldn't* discuss intrinsic values, it seems there is no easy way around it. It seems like values are inextricably tied to action. No matter the name of such values, whether instrumental, non-instrumental or along any of the myriad axiological scales, it seems necessary that values are the reasons anyone does things. Any action whatsoever would seem to necessitate some goal, or some minimal reason that doing the action seems *better* than not doing it. The capacity to possess goals seems to further necessitate some minimal degree of *desiring* and thus *valuing*. Therefore it seems we cannot extricate valuing from any practical philosophy whatsoever. No matter the degree of agreement in practical policy, such practical agreement is inextricably tied to some overlapping experience of value, in so far as every goal in action necessitates an end which is deemed valuable. In this sense there cannot be goals or actions without a minimal underlying value, as all goals are attitudes with a normative

[11]Callicott and Regan respectively, requoted from Katie McShane: 'how to discover intrinsic value in nature is the defining problem for environmental ethics'; 'Only by meeting these theoretical criteria can we arrive at an ethic […] "of the environment, rather than an ethic for the use of the environment' (McShane, 2009, p. 408)
[12] Quoted from private conversation.

component, which are irreducible to descriptive statements without presupposing a value judgment. However, any reading suggesting that environmental pragmatists deny the reality and importance of intrinsic values should be avoided, as pragmatists often stress their compatibility with nature-centered ethics, without accepting one or the other as *true* to the exclusion of others. Insofar as pragmatism is a sustainability ethics it is often assumed that a sustainability ethics naturally conflicts with an environmental ethics proper (in Katz' and Callicott's sense), whereas this does not need to be the case. Firstly, as is argued in Light and Katz, the distinction anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism is 'meaningless, for it is impossible to draw a line between human well-being and the well-being of the environment in which it is situated (1996, p. 8). While this may be disputed in several cases, the intention is to preface the interrelated notion of value often employed by pragmatists.

> 'My purpose is to broaden our conception of the nature and task of ethics, so that we can begin to recognize the "ecology", so to speak, of environmental ethics itself, and thus begin to recognize the true conditions under which anthropocentrism might be overcome' (Weston, 1996a, pp. 139–140)

As non-human nature historically was indeed formalized by ethics as firmly beyond the realm of moral considerability, the transition to an expansive nature ethics marked a sudden theoretical shift, but was carried by moral sentiments and intuitions that likely followed a far more gradual path, which may have had its prelude early beyond. Unfavorable intuitions towards the blatant disrespect and lack of humility towards plants and animals, as is permissible for instance in Kantianism, are likely not unique in any part of history. As Richard Sylivan's last man example served to form the basis of a non-anthropocentric theory of value, it is reasonable to let it also count as the true mark of anthropocentrism, to which the original non-anthropocentric theory refers. If, in its strictest sense, anthropocentrism represents the negative answer to Sylvan's question of whether there is reason for nature to be preserved in the absence of humans, it is hard to tell if there were ever a large amount of people who held this view systematically, a view perhaps most easily linked with arrogance, sadism and outright cruelty. Today, it is likely even more difficult to find examples of the type of unfettered anthropocentrism imagined as the counter-point of non-anthropocentric value. We may realize then, that the requirements should be lowered to cover that slightly less-than-cosmological attitude that is meant.

Minteer is suspicious of whether a fully instrumental (that is anthropocentric) set of justifications at the end of the day is capable of capturing and adequately addressing everyday value intuitions, which is the very thing environmental pragmatists whishes to adapt to. Rethorically he asks:

> [A] question still remains in my mind; Does an instrumentalist reading of environmental values, even one as expansive and ostensibly nonmaterialist as Norton's, accommodate the full range of the public's everyday intuitions and sentiments regarding nonhuman nature? In other words, do instrumental arguments for environmental protection exhaust the value discussion, leaving nothing behind once the full array of "uses" of ecological components and systems are taken into account across space and time? I think not.(Minteer, 2012, p. 58)

As instrumental reasons may carry us a long way in terms of preservation for future generations, ecosystems cervices and de-carbonization, he explains, they may also risk doing disservice to other branches of the struggle such as animal welfare, which we should be reluctant to sacrifice. Further it should be clear that a value platform which only covers select parts of the valuing spectrum of everyday people will not be adoptable as a realistic broad starting point for cross-societal action and policy. However, Minteer asks whether or not Norton's weak anthropocentrism really is to be interpreted in this way as a negative answer to the question of intrinsic value in nature, or whether it is primarily an epistemological and meta-philosophical stance with regards to the best approach to public influence regardless of the existence of non-human value in nature. If this is the case, a silent value agnosticism simply deflects any accusations of chauvinism against Norton's weak anthropocentrism.

Minteer argues that Norton several times reveals his affiliations with non-human intrinsic values. Firstly, Norton mentions the instrumental value of non-instrumental valuing. He emphasizes how the mere attitude of non-anthropocentrism certainly is beneficial instrumentally to environmental issues, whether this value attitude would prove true or not. Acknowledging that such attitudes could render anyone much more prone towards pro-environmental behaviour than abstract and impersonal instrumental reasons alone, it would be silly to discourage intrinsic value in nature-attitudes: '[I]t would not be surprising that *speaking as if* nature has intrinsic value could provide useful guidance in adjusting human felt preferences.'(original emphasis; Norton, 2003, p. 172) But secondly, and more importantly,

Norton never seems to directly challenge the idea that non-human nature may possess value independent of human instrumental purposes. In fact, Ben Minteer notes how he even sometimes includes the protection of nature for its own sake in his arguments for claims that his style has become and in fact even in his abstract of his 1985 paper Beyond intrinsic value (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 2)he remarks how 'It becomes easy to justify respect for other life forms and concern for the natural environment, and indeed many of the standard arguments only become stronger, once the demand to establish intrinsic values is removed'(Weston, 1996b). He still maintains that instrumental human values should be *sufficient* for an adequate environmental ethic, and that it should not *require* 'questionable ontological commitments' (Norton, 2003, p. 172) to highly precise value claims such as advocated by Callicott or Katz when advocating that such discoveries of precise value is the very essence of any true environmental ethics. drawing in the very last sentence in his article on Occham's Razor, but nevertheless seems to be

Remarks on how Norton's later 'multi-centrism' inspired by his holism, reveals his intentions more clearly; that the foundational notion of final value is a reductionism which cuts short the full range of value in his interconnected holist view. His point is not to deny value outside of humans, rather the opposite; to argue for the complexity and plurality of values in all manifestations which arises out of all parts of a circular value chain, and through its diversity escapes capture in definite foundational theories of value in the simple binary metric of instrumental/non-instrumental.

2.5 Pluralism and Norton's convergence hypothesis

2.5.1 Pluralism

Kelly Parker defines moral pluralism as 'the view that no single moral principle, or over-arching theory of what is right, can be appropriately applied to all ethically problematic situations.' (1996, pp. 31–32) Andrew Light has further distinguished between both a theoretical and meta-theoretical pluralism: 'Theoretical pluralism is the acknowledgement of distinct, theoretically incommensurable basis for direct moral consideration. […] Metatheoretical pluralism involves an openness to the plausibility of divergent ethical theories working together in a single moral enterprise […]' (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 4) Light considers himself primarily a metatheoretical pragmatist, or a 'procedural pragmatist', as his primary concern is not with expounding on theories of intrinsic value, but to go beyond them, in order to bring attention to practical matters. This contrasts to Anthony Weston's elaborate attempts at an interrelational concept of intrinsic value. These two approaches might appear to contradict, but I think is fair to grant them compatibility both because they are equally oriented towards the goal of enabling more efficient ways to enable action and environmental agency – making environmentalism more palatable to everyday diverse people, so to say, but also because the second order approach to ethics, in Light's case, posits no specific requirements for position in the question of the first order level and vice versa. They are both sufficiently separated through their different layers so as to not overlap into contradiction. The whole idea of a meta-ethical pluralism is exactly to open up to different ideas of intrinsic value that may be helpful to common goals. It also seems harsh to deny meta-ethical pluralists like Light the freedom of an opinion at the first level question of value.

By accepting pluralism in both forms as opposed to monism, both Light and Weston abandons the mission to discover the correct and most justifiable ethical positions towards nature. However this is not seen as a concession or an ethical pull-back, but rather a step outside the confines of what it considers a stagnated project in ethical monism. By rejecting to propose yet

another, more justifiable or philosophically tenable ethical position in the attempt to make real progress, it rather attempts what can be likended to a Rawlsian approach to progress, an approach which does not set as its goal to anihilate plurality of opinion, but which rather works with plurality as the necessary backdrop of social change.

Both theoretical and meta-theoretical pluralism are important features of the pragmatic contributions to environmental philosophy, however weighted differently in the literature. To the degree that environmental pragmatism positions itself as a meta-theoretical comment on paradigmatic features of the discipline, its pluralism serves a primarily practical function to overcome the difficulties of monism. And a statement that if an environmental strategy is to work, it cannot reasonably depend upon the converting of humanity to any particular brand of philosophical non-anthropocentrism. in Pluralism becomes a way of admitting of Rawlsian social plurality of 'reasonable comprehensive doctrines' in a society whose citizens are 'deeply divided by conflicting and even incommensurable religious, philosophical and moral doctrines' (Rawls, 2005, p. 133). In the same fashion meta-theoretical pluralism aims to dismiss the idea that social or political unity must be based upon fundamental consensus. As equally rational individuals may arrive rationally at fundamentally opposing 'comprehensive doctrines' or world views – society will function not despite allowing this incongruence, but because of allowing it.

2.5.2 The convergence hypothesis

As pragmatists typically seek to avoid the highly technical form of the discussions, they wish to replace them with a serious investigation on the merits of moral pluralism. In what has been termed 'the convergence hypothesis' of environmental philosophy, Bryan Norton has argued to the support of pragmatic pluralism in ethics, that different environmental positions, both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric, tend to arrive at roughly the same principles for action and practical policy (Norton, 1997). According to Norton, the theoretical battleground of envionrmental philosopy seems to carry very little significance counted difference to practice or to common political goal. Justifications in favour of theoretical debate is often anchored in the prospect of competing moral claims. However, by providing arguments that environmental acton is very rarely altered by such differences, this justification is undermined. Remembering the Peirceian remarks about relevance to experience (chap. 2.2.1), a pragmatist outlook would

suggest that as long at the theoretical differences of theories render no particular difference to our experience or to our action, the difference is metaphysical and unintelligible to us. Predictably, the correctness of the hypothesis is loudly denied by proponents of intrinsic value theory, such as J. Baird Callicott, who argue that such compromise leaves out fundamental parts of an adequate ethic that is not compensated for by the fact that different ethics happen to arrive at similar results.

Unsurprisingly, Callicott and others have contested the claims made by Norton in his convergence hypothesis, and the pluralistic invitations to the opponent of environmental ethics (Callicott, 2009). According to Callicott, dilemmas of competing claims of diverging ethics make for no good common ground staring point of a pluralistic ethic either. However, an empirical study conducted by Ben Minteer and Robert Manning 'supports the a generalized version of Norton's thesis' (2000) strengthening the grounds for Norton's moral pluralism. Callicott's and others' objections are likely linked to a resistance to the consequentialist notion that the right choice for the wrong reasons is ethically equal to the right choices for the right reasons. Even from a consequential viewpoint, the right actions for the wrong reasons seems to amount to an unstable temporary situation when correct actions are contingent upon cheer coincidence. Differences of moral principle while not of moral conduct may inevitably seem to be bound to confrontation in one form or another, even if temporarily aligned. However, when arguing that the convergence hypothesis is correct not in spite of differences but mainly because people tend to have *similar* values, this picture of wrong reasons seem dissipated.

At any rate, the sharp distinction between right or wrong reasons or principles also seems suspicious from the pragmatist viewpoint. If this consequential reason for admitting the role of principle seems unsatisfying – the respect for principles not because they are *right* but because of their instrumental necessity – we can remind ourselves that that the distinction between true and -à-vis the argument for values –a respect for the consequences of right reasons *is* a respect for right reasons. To draw the deontological analogy, the respect for the moral law of truthfulness, i.e., seems to be inherently intertwined with our respect for the subsistence of the institution of truthfulness. Questioning the order of priority between this functioning of the truth institution on the one hand, and the moral law on the other, asking which is more fundamental, as though one is universal and the other is not, is to make assumptions of their ontological separateness, rather than their being descriptions of the same. Such an interrelated dynamic

understanding of ethics is very much in tune with the holistic functional notion of value put forth by Antony Weston.

2.6 A new type of ethics

Surely, the reason for opting for a rethinking of ethics is not the result of philosophical incoherency on behalf of previous conceptions of ethics, but is rather the response to a perceived lack in the range of ethics. As Anthony Weston puts it:

> 'Pragmatism insists most centrally on the interrelatedness of our values. The notion of fixed ends is replaced by a picture of values dynamically interdepending with other values and with beliefs, choices and exemplars: pragmatism offers, metaphorically at least, a kind of "ecology" of values.' (1996b, p. 285)

To the extent that sharp distinctions function to divide and limit, rather than to aid the understanding and enable action, they are seen as wrong not from a lack of argumentative power, but in terms of inhibiting the very goal the theory was constructed to aid. Thus the feature most distinctive to pragmatist environmental ethics is likely its tendency to blur the usual sharp lines in ethics and the paradigmatic dichotomies; the distinctions between individual objects of value, the distinction of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism, or even the is-ought-divide from David Hume, in accordance with the normative features of truth described by William James. To the pragmatist, then, environmental progress appears possible from a simply descriptive perspective, as the values to be protected seem already implicit and readily identifiable from the merely descriptive level. As already valuing nature in various ways by virtue of being environmentalists there seems no need not formulate any theory of intrinsic value so long as intrinsic value is already embedded in our action. If already treating nature as though having intrinsic value in practice as it must be implicit in every action and desire, and there is no need to imprint an abstract notion of value from the outside.

As mentioned previously, ordinary ethics seem bent only to answer the individual normative questions of 'what ought we do' while at the same time leaving the question of 'how to do what we ought to do' untouched. If we are to succeed in bringing a large portion of humanity over to the class of agents acting morally, it seems we must understand what preconditions are required for such a massive tilt on the distribution curve of moral agency. It appears we cannot just

require the populations of the world to shape up in a fit of moral indignation, much the same way that moral appeal is unlikely to affect crime-rates or the like. Weston brings the practical character of practise and moral action into play in his 'enabling environmental practice' (Weston, 1996a, p. 152). In reflecting on the interactive relationship between practises and principles that occurs in social ethical evolution, he points out that ethics are misunderstood if contrived to function as a unilateral top-down mechanism in which the agent is conceived as a passive receiver of principles. , when the its theoretical prescriptions are as much submitted to and informed by real practical practises that precede them. The attempt to induce ethical principles abstractly outside the frame of practise to start with could be a bit as unnatural and forced as the learning of a foreign language through the abstract deconstructive rules of grammar, which is in reverse order compared to the childhood learning of language through spontaneous practice which only discloses its theoretical structure upon later reflection after-the-fact.

There is a problem, according to Weston inn the concentric picture of ethics, in which moral standing is awarded in accordance with an expanding circle, continuously referring to its center (Weston, 2004). As the continued expansion of ethics are appearing to circle around an epicentre in humanity, it may seem like we are still dealing with a type of anthropocentrism with small shooting branches out into nature through which we ascribe it value in extension of out human value. Weston's so called 'multi-centrism' takes for granted that for value to be truly independent (which as is recalled is required of intrinsic value) it must not be seen as a continuation of human ethics or understood as deriving its value by virtue of some resemblance to the value of human beings. Rather it must be incommensurable and irreducible to other values.[13] Perhaps the continued expansion of ethics in this way, as has been the norm in the first and still only valid attempt to accommodate the need for moral standards across a non-human domain. These expansionist attempts still risk anthropocentrsm in terms of attempting to integrate non-human elements in a distinctly human-oriented ethics. As its value is understood in this way, as deriving from the *human* value conception . Value is understood on the premises of the valuer rather than on the premises of the valued as an epistemological limitation inherent to perspective. Of course, anything else is impossible, as we cannot step out of ourselves to

[13] This idea could lead to the conclusion that *all* value, including human values must also be incommensurable, so that we cannot value anything against a common denominator of value. Then there can be no 'equal' or 'unequal' value except from just value in it self

experience first-hand the value we attempt to asses. Thomas Nagel famously points out that we cannot know what it is like to be a bat (1974). Far less can we be a mountain or an ecosystem, which makes them even harder to approximate from the human perspective. Perhaps it is a mistake, then, to interpret these entities in analogue to the human values that we have access to experiencing from our perspective, rather than postulating an ontologically different, incommensurable type of value altogether outside the epistemological reach of what can be approximated using human values. As mentioned earlier, Richard Watson argues that anthropomorphic projections of human value as in Aldo Leopolds phrase 'thinking like a mountain' are exactly examples of such analogies, which tend to fall right back into the anthropocentric value understanding by interpreting nature values as an extension of human values (Watson, 2008). The Humean problem of transcending ones simple impressions in synthesizing complex ideas like golden mountains comes to mind: It would indeed appear impossible to conceive of any radically different type of value if the value shares no common properties with human values with which to connect them and make them comprehendible to us. However, this epistemic gap to understanding the exact nature of non-human values should not be in the way of accepting what Weston calls *multicentrism* (2004), a model which attempts to cancel the 'centrism' aspect of ethics altogether in proposing that value does not need a common denominator for common reference, just as values needs no absolute moral grounding before being distinguishable in relation to other values. In suggesting that value needs not at all be unified he opens the possibility of value pluralism, where many incommensurable types of values may be conceived as coexisting, but without being comparable by any externally observable criteria.

2.7 Beyond intrinsic value and non-anthropocentric monism

Environmental pragmatists find that one of the greatest common denominators of environmental philosophies, the evaluative thesis, need not be as indispensable and defining to a workable environmental ethic as widely assumed. An often cited quotation from Anthony Weston's 1985 article 'Beyond Intrinsic Value' he states: 'The real power of the pragmatic

approach lies in what it does not say, in what it has removed the need to say' (1996b). Although environmental pragmatists seldom deny the truth of the evaluative thesis[14], they argue that its considered importance as a precisely defined theoretical foundation may in fact be either idle or counterproductive to the ultimate goals of environmental philosophy, in so far as such ultimate goals are indeed practical and not merely theoretical for its own sake. In environmental ethics at large, we likely find that the evaluative thesis in its myriad forms is motivated both by instrumental and inherent reasons. That is, its reasons for being adopted philosophically seem to be twofold, divided in both its philosophical integrity and persuasiveness in its own right, but also for its instrumental use in facilitating the readjustment of values and conducts towards nature. We might find that regardless of our position on the centrism-scale, we should as environmental philosophers always support the promotion of a non-anthropocentric over an anthropocentric or instrumental position if we want to advance environmental behaviour effectively. Ben Minteer touches upon this when he asks:

> 'Should we not, as environmental philosophers, recognize the potential usefulness of such noninstrumental claims for motivating individuals and in warranting environmental practices and policies – at least in some situations?' (Minteer, 2012, p. 58)

These would, from the anthropocentric point of view appear as deviant causes (or justifications) to environmental practises, which to them serve to motivate the right kinds of actions but only through the wrong kinds of reasons. This is an argument often used for example to defend the strong position of religious practises which retain their social or moral functions regardless of the ontological truth of religious justifications provided. This instrumental side of the evaluative thesis, however, pragmatists dismiss on the alleged experience that the evaluative thesis scarcely works *better* in motivating behaviour than its ethical competitors, and that it is thus of generally low instrumental use to the environmental campaigns which take it as its most fundamental axiom. As in any dilemma of choosing whether to pursue or abandon a theory

[14] Minteer for instance asks: '[D]o instrumental arguments for environmental protection exhaust the value discussion, leaving nothing behind once the full array of "uses" of ecological components and systems are taken into account across space and time? I think not.' (2012, p. 58) He further argues that '[Bryan] Norton is not necessarily assailing the merit of noninstrumentalist views toward nature, but is instead implying that those holding these views have, at the very least, some meta-ethical explaining to do and that this type of value should not be assumed to be the *only* ground for an acceptable environmental ethic'. (Minteer, 2012, p. 60) It should seem clear that declining to *operate* with any particular closely defined notion of value does not exempt one from the view that independent values may exist in whatever form. Even if Norton declines the use of 'intrinsic value' even in describing patently human values, nobody seems to accuse Norton of nihilism, as such a supposed denial of any type of value would imply.

based on lack of positive support, is clear that such a conclusion doesn't follow. As every good theorist knows, the absence of evidence does not entail evidence of absence. However, for different reasons, the moral potency of such argument in causing or inspiring radical behaviour change across wide populations seems rather weak both intuitively and empirically, they argue. If so the instrumental rationale for upholding the evaluative thesis should be ruled out. The movement's prime contention is that regardless of whatever position on the moral status of nature should be the most philosophically tenable, what should matter most to us given the urgency of the current problems, is finding the most effective solutions, instead of waiting to arrive at infinitesimally more accurate ones. If adopting this approach, the natural consequence, according to environmental pragmatists, would be to endorse some brand of moral pluralism in the attempt to unite common efforts to an optimized environmental output.

In the seminal 1985 paper by Anthony Weston entitled 'Beyond intrinsic value - Pragmatism in environmental ethics' Weston carefully introduces the idea of an environmental pragmatism by the disclaimer that:

> "Pragmatism sounds like just what environmental ethics is against: shortsighted, human-centered instrumentalism. In popular usage that connotation is certainly common. Philosophical pragmatism, however, offers a theory of values which is by no means committed to that crude anthropocentrism, or indeed to any anthropocentrism at all." (Weston, 1996b, p. 285)

This apologetic precursor is also found elsewhere, such as this prophylactic injection by Kelly Parker, who states:

> "'Pragmatism' here refers to a school of philosophical thought – American pragmatism – and not to that short sighted, allegedly 'practically-minded' attitude towards the world that is a major obstacle to environmentally responsible behavior in our time" (Parker, 1996, p. 21)

The anxiety is no doubt justified, as pragmatism has often been rather sceptically received throughout the community. Seen as a challenger to the very front of environmentalism and its core non-anthropocentric project, environmental pragmatists are often seen defending themselves against charges of relativism, anti-philosophy, and the dissipation of philosophical duty, which will also be discussed in this chapter. Weston remarks, however that "[o]ne charge

of anthropocentrism should not detain us" (Weston, 1996b, p. 285). It is worth avoiding the misconception that environmental pragmatism as such promotes anthropocentrism in its regular sense[15], as although pragmatists are unwilling to endorse particular theories of inherent value in nature, they are also typically unwilling to reject them, opting rather for a pluralistic value agnosticism instead of an absolute monistic position. As previously discussed, even Brian Norton who argues the case for his 'weak anthropocentrism' (while he prefers the less loaded term 'humanism') seems to distance himself from the classical strong anthropocentric view that human beings alone can be centres of ultimate value. Pragmatism in environmental philosophy represents rather what Ben Minteer calls 'environmentalism's third way, playing on the classical pragmatist attempt of bringing together the two parts in the great chasm in philosophy.

In Minteer's third way he attempts to moderate between the two major 'schools' of environmental thought, namely anthropocentric reformism of the so called 'shallow ecologists' on the one hand, and the ecocentric intrinsic value theorists, such as the deep ecologists or biocentrists on the other. (Minteer, 2006). As there are many possible sources to improved behaviour towards the environment, according to environmental pragmatists, none should be denounced solely on account of omitting allegiance to any particular abstract notion of intrinsic value in nature. Such cooperative restrictions, they argue, seem an unaffordable luxury in today's situation, and seem to serve no real purpose in environmentalism. Thus environmental pragmatists typically suggest lowering the requirements of an adequate ethics contend brand of ethical pluralism in the attempt to unite diverse efforts towards commonly recognized goals. Brian Norton famously argues, as mentioned above, that anthropocentrist contributions to the environmental campaign need not be dismissed, as long as they give us adequate reasons to avoid careless storage of 'toxic wastes, overpopulation, wanton extinctions, air and water pollution, etc.'(Norton, 2003, p. 163). Admittedly such an 'adequate' ethic falls short of what ethics usually aim for in a 'true' ethic, but meets the same adequacy criterion of any ethic with which he is willing to cooperate. It seems to pragmatists that the route to such goals as sustainability, animal welfare, species and eco-system preservation and the like now takes a

[15] Although Norton admittedly defends what he calls 'weak anthropocentrism' this should be sharply contrasted with the regular sense of the word which holds that moral standing is strictly reserved human ends. Norton's sense of anthropocentrism is based on 'considered preference' as opposed to 'felt preference' (Norton, 2003, p. 164). This marks the difference to moral systems where the fulfillment of direct human interests (felt interests) may count, and opens for a conception of value that regards as good whatever is 'considered' to be valuable without any other further commitments to the interests of the valuer. This distinction is left vague, perhaps intentionally so, but it steps dangerously close to a conception of intrinsic value in its defense of treating nature *as if* having intrinsic value. Norton's later example of the sand dollar also seems to reveal an attitude that sand dollars are inherently valuable, but only refusing to use those words (Norton, 1994, pp. 3–4).

long and unnecessary detour if forced through the confounding philosophical controversies of intrinsic value, and ultimately, of that overly restrictive criterion of philosophical truth. If the intricate debate surrounding the evaluative thesis functions to impede general agreement and the progress on basic policy principles, then these efforts should be suspended in favour of more constructive projects.

Rather, even as environmental pragmatists most often reject the label of non-anthropocentrism (as they decline most labels of monistic value theories altogether), they most often also reject one of anthropocentrism in the traditional meaning, with the notable exception of the weak anthropocentric position endorsed by Weston. Their rejection of non-anthropocentrism as a basis for ethics must not be confused with the objectionable stance that only humans may have moral standing. They reject these labels for the same reason that they reject the whole metric along the so called expansionist scale of ethics that has gained dominance in environmental thinking. The expansionist scale, in short, is the mode of ethical thinking characterised by the continuous expansion of the *ethical circle* – that is the domain of things granted ethical concern, and particularly *intrinsic value*. Christopher D. Stone describes the expansionist scale along which environmental philosophy has operated with the words of Darwin, explaining:

> 'Originally, each man had regardonly for himself and those of a very narrow circle around him; later, he came to regard more and more "not only the welfare, but the happiness of all his fellow-men"; then "his sympathies became more and more tender and widely diffused, extending to all races, to the imbecile, maimed, and other useless members of society, and finally to the lower animals…."' (Stone, 2008, p. 298)

It is along this axis that the dualist division between anthropocentrist and non-anthropocentrist ethics first arose. The first relates to a human-centred, conservatively narrow circle of values ascribing intrinsic independent value strictly to human beings alone. The second relates to an expanded, wider circle of values (how wide is one of the most frequent topics of discussion) eclipsing those values relating strictly to human concerns. Depending on what is meant by 'expansion' we can contrive from this at least two possible understandings of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism; One which considers a view non-anthropocentric in so far as it admits at least *moral standing*, that is to say *any* sort of inherent value to some aspect of the natural world; and one which requires *equal* value be ascribed in the egalitarian senses before it qualifies.

In both cases, the particular technical formulation of two dimensional expansionist ethics is perhaps the greatest objection of pragmatists. One aspect of this objection is with the concept of intrinsic value, which several philosophers, Norton included, dismisses it as an unnecessary concept to environmental progress. Perhaps certain conducts and actions may elicit or *prescribe* a theory of intrinsic value. However, such theory is not retroactive, and theory does not in the same way elicit action directly, and provides neither direct motivations nor long term internalisation simply through its own wording alone. It seems spontaneously clear that a theory of moral conduct follows *after* the moral conduct which it describes and is predicated upon. It is not through any abstract and sterile observance of theory that values are in fact valued, but it is the practical valuing that leads to the attempts to capture value by theory. Therefore theories of intrinsic value is secondary to the valuing.

He proposes instead an ethical 'multi-centrism' in which a plurality of incommensurable value centra may replace the old expansionist (and by that same tolken commensurable) notion of value. who emphasizes practicality over theory, and wishes to expand the understanding of ethics into an 'ecology' of ethics itself, in the attempt to understand how ethical theory can be converted to change of action; 'enabling environmental action', and discover the 'true conditions under which anthropocentrism might be overcome' (Weston, 1996b, pp. 139–140). laments the over-abstraction in the field of ethics which runs the risk of missing the real and concrete ways in which humans interact with the non-human world. That is not to say that pragmatists desire simplification or dread capturing the indubitably complex and abstract nature of these interactions. Rather they often call for a turn away from the familiar two dimensional ethics. The real point of difference between environmental pragmatists and non-anthropocetrists, in other words, is not so much the *content* of such values as seen in environmental philosophy, but rather the *form* of these values. Indeed, a major point made by environmental pragmatists is the way that the practical content of these values converge despite their theoretical differences. Some environmental pragmatists even contest the notion of intrinsic value itself, but ethical concern and value, whatever form it might take, is manifestly ascribed to non-human loci by both by pragmatists and non-anthopocentrists alike. The formulation of those values, and the strategies to protect them differ. The misconception of anthropocentrism in pragmatism is seemingly widespread. This separation of form and content

follows the spirit of William James asserting that pragmatism "does not stand for any special results. It is a method only."

Norton argues that a non-anthropocentric preference to treat nature as possessing intrinsic value may still count as *weakly* anthropocentric by still depending formally on the satisfaction of a human preference towards nature and being still directed towards the realization of a traceably human value (Norton, 1984). He argues that the satisfaction of some non-anthropocentric value theory still counts as a human interest, and therefore that it is in reality founded on what he calls *human considered interests*. Non-anthropocentrism is thus still a strictly human affair, and much to its demise, is defined precisely through the human oriented value concepts it seeks to avoid. In parallel with the classical problem of altruism, it is not clear that the protection of interests external to the agent can ever be fully explained in terms of interests completely disjoined and external to the valuer. In other words, the protection of value always implies a fulfilment of some type of interest on behalf of the valuer. Norton's case can be illustrated by imagining a mother caring for her child. The mother acts selflessly in her caring, sacrificing her own well being for that of the child, and understands her own actions and behaviour not in terms of her own desires in relation to the child, but in terms of the child's self-contained moral status and of its external and independent (intrinsic) good. However, Norton might insist that the behaviour of the mother still counts as a fulfilling of a *considered interest* of the mother, given by the fact of her valuing her child. This is not to say that the child is not inherently valuable, or somehow of a mere instrumental value to the mother's satisfaction of considered interest. It merely implies that the recognition of value by a valuer requires an interest. If a valuer cannot be said to entertain a minimal interest towards some object, the object cannot be said to be valued by the valuer. This does not exclude the possibility of value, either inherent or extrinsic, subsiding with the object per se. It does, however, maintain the role of the valuer to a value system, and claims that valuers cannot fully extract themselves from the any recognition of intrinsic values

2.8 Criticism and problems

It should be clear that even if aiming at bypassing the usual emphasis on philosophical rigidity and clear definitions, environmental pragmatists do take seriously the philosophical or logical problems of their theories. This should be clear insofar as environmental pragmatism is still a part in the philosophical discourse. Not doing so would firstly risk depriving it of any serious attention within philosophical communities whatsoever, and secondly would manifest exactly the type of absolutist attitude it wishes to avoid, which is not open to revision or improvement. Many criticisms have been, and no doubt will continue to be raised as the discussion continues, and no philosophical position of any value have done away with its problems entirely. It is tempting to conclude that critical discussion is not as much a threat as a healthy sign of a promising future. As environmental pragmatism has already packed a certain amount of discussion behind its back despite its relative novelty in the debate, critics have already brought to bear on a number of issues and potential problems that should deserve attention from anyone serious about developing environmental pragmatism towards an adapted, tenable position. Some of these charges include relativism, materialism, reductionism, anti-philosophy, duty-dissipation, and obviously of both hard and soft anthropocentrism.

First I want to give special mention to some of the criticisms that I will not be discussing thoroughly before I move on: First, the debate over whether or not environmental pragmatism qualifies as a philosophy, as it is claimed that 'metaphilosophical environmental pragmatism provides no philosophical content'(Callanan, 2010, p. 133), or that it evades exactly the types of questions that environmental philosophy is supposed to answer (Pearson, 2014; Samuelsson, 2010). These are among the most frequent accusations proponents of environmental pragmatism engage. A first note to this is that classifying pragmatism as negative content (which I believe is a mistake) should in any case be far from declaring it as 'no content', the way it is often intended to mean *lesser* in force and implication than its positive counterparts. This application of the distinction between positive and negative seems dubious at best if we are right to note that negative conclusions are as much *positive* philosophical arguments as arguments with positive conclusions. There are obviously many ways in which what a philosophy *is not* counts as equally important as what it *is*. Concerning the positive suggestions of environmental pragmatism, like its suggestions for value-theory, these have already been addressed earlier, and will not be dealt with further here. Likewise, I have addressed the issue

of what ‘questions environmental philosophy is supposed to answer’ by denying that the classical question of ‘what we ought to do’ is the only question for ethics, or that ‘how to find intrinsic nature in value’ conceived as such must be the only enterprise of a distinctly environmental philosophy.

Second, the criticism that pragmatism amounts to anthropocentrism has been rejected both by showing to problems with the terminological framework, as well as pointing to the fact that the pragmatic project is not to discredit the notion of human independent value, but rather to move beyond it in the discourse or reject the requirement of non-anthropocentrism for any legitimate and productive position in environmental ethics.

Third, the last mention goes to the charge of relativism, particularly in the context of pluralism, which claims the pragmatic rejection of moral grounding means it is doomed to float free, potentially serving anti-environmental values if prompted by the right context. This is often answered by insisting that reasonability rather than ‘truth’ serves as grounding, and that the endorsements of pragmatism are not free-floating at all, as there are limits to what can be considered ‘reasonable’ positions (cf. Jardins, 2012, p. 263). As there is abundant literature on these most common objections already, I will conclude these remarks and move on with some other possible problems which have received less attention, and then present some of my own responses.

.

2.8.1 Is pragmatism self-enclosed as well?

Environmental pragmatists have from the outset criticized the reigning purportedly self-enclosed paradigm in environmental ethics and suggested a new set of criteria for philosophical success. These criteria should be based not on internal philosophical integrity and 'whether the philosophy is right' like the view of Eric Katz' and many others (Light, 2002, p. 105), but on whether it works in gaining public acceptance and in bringing momentum to real environmental action. Now, some 30 years in the making[16] it seems only natural to turn its own criticisms against itself to see how it holds up. To the degree that it rejects traditional environmental

[16] Counting from the initial text by Weston

philosophy on the grounds of lacking the capability for non-academic impact and for stretching beyond academics, the question raised by its own terms then becomes whether it is itself capable of escaping the predicament of internal confinement. Being about exactly the same age as environmental philosophy as a focused discipline was at the time, loosely speaking, it might be pertinent to see whether pragmatists have spent their time better. We then start by asking the obvious question of whether or not pragmatism has gained any sort of impact similar to the one it was criticising conventional environmental ethics to lack. It might seem off-hand that it has not, and that the discussions of environmental pragmatism also remain quite within the same abstract theoretical frame as that to which it is a purported alternative.

In this respect, the environmental pragmatist movement has indeed also experienced a bit of inertia, much in the same way as other environmental movements, not only in terms of outward influence, but also internally among professional philosophers. To the extent that examples of their practical application can be shown for, it should at least be uncontroversial that its theoretical focus still outweighs any practical efforts that are made in extension of their practical intentions. So there seems to be several departures from what its early theorists might have hoped for. It looks like the vision of environmental pragmatism involved three goals; (1) distinguishing itself theoretically from mainstream environmental philosophy and the theoretical frameworks and discussions of non-anthropoentric monism and (2) to establish an appeals not only inwards in academia but also outwards towards the general public that it sought to influence. The hope in turn being that this would provide (3) wide acceptance and influence in broad regions of the public and internally in academia. The two first would be in its own power to control, and the last being the hope of good reception following from the successful completion of the two first. However as it stands it could seem environmental pragmatism so far achieved none of the above, as it is still engaged in the same theoretical discussions circling questions of value and non-anthropocentrism, it is still not outwardly *applied*, and it has not been *adopted*, neither inside academia nor outside.

It is certainly hard to deny that environmental pragmatism at present is devoting a lot of effort to stabilize itself as a coherent set of positions within the academic community, or that it is in fact addressing mainly academic theoretical issues aimed at an academic audience, in the exact same way as its environmental predecessors. If environmental pragmatism as an academic discipline or movement is emerging equally confined to the same abstract and internal level of debate with which it first took issue at its early stage, there could be grounds for concern.

Furthermore, even if it had accomplished everything it portrayed to become at the outset, the most serious concern might be if point (3) turned out to fail and that the very ideas of environmental pragmatism fully realised proved to be unpopular or without the potential for propagation in either the public or in environmental philosophy.

Indeed one could argue that the very attempt to become applied and practical rather than theoretical plays out in an inherently non-applied fashion. This might be somewhat of a paradox if advocating 'action over words' is itself a word-based approach and an inherent manifestation of its opposite. There is no contradiction, however in admitting that pragmatists can engage at the non-technical applied level *as well* as on the technical level at the terms of those theorists it seeks to persuade. However, even when forgiving this need to attack theoretical problems despite its aspirations to simplicity and non-technicality, there is still the question of why it has not yet simultaneously branched out to the outside world as it first suggested, in order to achieve the pervasive influence it aims for.

If, however, the charge is worded as an attack against pragmatists themselves and the way they have conducted their project, one might note that this charge contains a strain of the ad hominem *tu quoque* fallacy: Claiming hypocrisy with the proponents of environmental pragmatism does little to refute the original argument itself. If there proves to be a failure on the part of environmental pragmatists to employ the ideas they set out with, this is not a valid to reject the ideas themselves. However, we can refine the criticism to include how pragmatists have argued that the adoptability and practical potency of a theory must be measured empirically by the success of those who employ it. In this case the criticism may still be sound if either the course staked out in the beginning (tasks (1) and (2)) have proven not in fact feasible, or if the course was followed through, but without seeing the expected outcome of (3). If it is the case that the progress so far achieved with pragmatism constitutes a negative datum[17] as to its success and impact, that it has performatively disaffirmed itself like the purported case of environmental philosophy at large, it seems environmental pragmatism suffers from the same issues as those

[17] Although absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and negative data are not logically sufficient for positive disaffirmation, as known by the induction-problem, the disaffirmation could be construed in a positive sense. One still knows nothing of whether the theory will work in the future, but one has at least proven it to *not always* work, which is a weaker affirmation, but a positive one. With pragmatists, however, the induction problem, just as in the sciences, does not really weigh heavily with regards to abandoning a theory that does not seem to work.

of the opposing parties in environmental philosophy that it sought to heal. However, there is a couple of problems with this view.

Firstly, there is a manifest asymmetry between environmental pragmatism and environmental philosophy as a whole, which tilts the comparison. The first part of this asymmetry that pragmatism has so far had less time on its hands than the rest of the combined community. Granted, pragmatism, as a source of criticism against the conventional approach to environmental philosophy utilized this argument of non-effectiveness or non-practicability when the conventional approach was about as old as the pragmatic approach is now. Still it seems that if this is a valid argument, it is now even more compelling against the conventional approach than against the pragmatic one, as it has had even more time under its wings. Also, there is no denying that the approach of environmental pragmatism has consisted only of a handful of people during the same time, in comparison to the collected force of environmental philosophers, which seems to have had a greater chance to gain the larger impact. The question arises then of why pragmatism has not been adopted to a greater extent by *philosophers* in the first place, if one of its main points of contention is adoptability. One might argue that if philosophers or others do not already find it compelling, it also fails on its own criteria. Again, unlike other branches that measure their success as argumentative validity alone, pragmatists are forced to include the degree of appeal and a relational component towards its audience in the criteria of success.

There are two points to this, one regarding its appeal inwards, and one regarding its appeal outwards: the first is that pragmatism is still such a marginal position in the field, that we might argue that it has simply still not gained the critical mass[18] required to be noticeable at all. As I mentioned, it has consisted of merely a handful of theorists, and its reason for escaping the attention of philosophers might be contingent upon this fact. We notice how this differs from the environmental philosophy movement at large, as it is most definitely in contact with a wide audience within the philosophical community, suggesting that its number of theoretical supporters are somewhat more reflective of its general level of appeal in the community, an appeal pragmatists could have enjoyed if it reached such a critical mass and area of exposure.

The second is that there is a difference between being philosophically adoptable and being popularly adoptable. Most of environmental philosophers already admits this when talking

[18] I borrow this term from astronomy where it indicates the 'tipping point' of mass required for a celestial object to sustain nuclear fission.

about the current supposed gap between the common naïve anthropocentrism allegedly held by the majority, and the more philosophically complex ecocentrisms held by philosophers. If monistic non-anthropocentrists are on their way to subvert this paradigm of common anthropocentrism, it seems we have already agreed that these two groups have different inclinations in theoretical intuitions already. If pragmatism fails to resonate with the particular ecocentric or biocentric theories of philosophers, we have still said nothing that regards its appeal to ordinary people. In fact, as pragmatism seeks to address and cultivate the positive aspects of already existing moral attitudes, meting people where they are, so to speak, it seems to follow from it very definition that it should be more harmonious with ordinary sympathies and rid of the need to secure moral converts before being endorsed by non-philosophers. If posed as a competition between pragmatism and monistic non-anthropocentrism, the score might well be nil on both sides so far in this matter of being 'endorsed' by the public. However, even if we concede that environmental pragmatism has proven *equally* non-endorsed in terms of popular acceptance (this equality under heavy doubt) it seems we can argue that regular environmental philosophies are either not known in the general public because of its non-interest in popularising itself, and that if they were known, would have greater obstacles than pragmatism in terms of gathering acceptance full-fledged converts to their particular narrow versions of value theory.

Secondly; it is not in fact given that environmental pragmatists have yet taken upon themselves to reach out to this wider audience. Given its position with a mere handful of people across the world that is currently defending it in the communities of environmental philosophy, it does not seem obvious that environmental pragmatists as of yet have the resources to propagate itself outside the frames of academic discussion. This does again have something to do with its position on the low side of its critical mass. It seems rather that environmental philosophy is a two-stage rocket[19] that at present is concerned merely with arguing for the legitimacy of their approach, and not actually conducting the approach itself. First it needs to establish itself among theoretical supporters before it may also be spread out and proliferate in a non-theoretical and accessible form. The analogy to other successful movements like Marxism shows how it is not necessary for all contributors of a movement to be formally schooled in its theoretical dimensions, as long as it can be supported by a sufficiently large and united theoretical

[19] I thank supervisor for this next astronomical expression.

foundation of philosophers and theorists. Therefore, this foundation needs to be established first before proceeding to the next step.

Furthermore, many elements of environmental pragmatism is untouched by the criticism of falling on its own criteria – like the efforts of creating pluralistic common platforms within philosophical environmentalism, or the argument of focus-change towards action rather than aiming for philosophical resolution. Whether environmental pragmatism is a fit contender to accomplish this task is one thing, the need for it to be done, quite another. Arguments regarding the primacy of action and consequence over theoretical purity aren't strictly speaking rendered less valid either by their being adopted or accepted in the scientific community, nor by the actions of their proponents. They might argue that even though the test of an environmental philosophy should be to what degree it has potential to eventually lead to practical change, a contingent lack of academic acceptance of this principle as a norm for further academic pursuits would not invalidate it.

It also seems we can argue that environmental pragmatism as a school which is in fact oriented towards the goal of attaining popular influence, stands a better chance of attaining it than a different school which is not informed by this goal. It is hard to judge the respective potentialities of these two approaches empirically given only negative evidence. It is merely a claim that the strategy would be effective *if* it were adopted. Every strategy towards such aims, no matter how potent, is still dependent on acceptance from peers and adoption to be put into effect. The accusation that pragmatism also suffers from ineffectiveness can thus be met by claiming that it has simply not yet been employed and tested as opposed to conventional environmental philosophy. Further, even if rejecting this defence, pragmatist approaches contain many elements that are not invalidated by the fact that they have not yet been able to implement mass adoption.

As environmental philosophy today is, with some exceptions, fairly homogeneous with respect to its endorsement of non-antropocentrism. Such a powerful position is not enjoyed by pragmatism. We might separate within environmental pragmatism the appeal to within the philosophical community as such, which is the appeal to change their strategy in relation to the general public, and their suggestion to the general public as such. Obviously, if the appeal to

the philosophical community is overruled, it is also not going to proliferate and arrive in a forceful manner to the public. If the general promise of environmental pragmatism, then, is modified to this *if*, then, the criticism seems undermined so long as the inbuilt criteria of being successful is not fulfilled. The promise of environmental pragmatism must in that case be modified to 'if adopted as a strategy in the outside world, it would be more efficient than the current method', But this begs the question of how academics could be exempt from the crowd whose impressionability to the theory determine the successfulness of environmental pragmatism. let through to envisioned as a chain reacting strategy working independently of whether it is being adopted as a strategy or not.

However, this could be a rebuttal similar to the initial defence of environmental ethics against the charge of ineffectiveness; that absence of evidence corroborating their approach is not evidence of absence. The logical problem of induction tells that the lack of positive evidence can never falsify an approach in the same way as discovering white swans does nothing to show that all swans are white. The seemingly lacking results of conventional environmental ethics (postulating for simplicity that they are indeed *lacking*) might just as well reflect an insufficient force with witch the approach is applied, as it might show the insufficiency of the approach itself. Judging whether to march forward with increased force or whether to turn back, can seem an open question in this regard. However, such suggestions may seem unsatisfactory, as they place the burden of proof away from the proponents of particular theories and demand that we must hold a fundamental agnosticism in relation to any number of 'environmental approaches' that have not yet been proven *not* to work. There must also be some positive criteria for an environmental framework to be a valid contender in the discussion.

Secondly they might admit that environmental pragmatism contains an inherently theoretical element, but still maintain that it *also* includes a practical element directed at a non-academic audience. In so far as pragmatists also make attempts at gaining academic acceptance, it must necessarily play out on an academic arena, but this frame needs not be mutually exclusive of the more outward directed approach in conjunction with the internal discussions.

Third, and perhaps most importantly is the fact that pragmatists like Minteer and Manning do indeed stress the side of practical applicability of their approach as well, as in their discussions

of management of American public lands, and the political implications of pragmatism. (2003, abstract).

2.8.2 Compatibility paradox of pluralism

A second issue, which I will term the 'compatibility paradox', regards the potential tension between the pluralistic inclusive position of pragmatists and the pragmatists' argument *against* monistic ethics. It might spontaneously seem weird when pluralists talk about the ethical wrongness of monism, as though the point of pluralism after all was not simply accepting monistic theories and incorporating them into a broader framework. It seems we also here have a self-referential paradox on our hands if we contend that pluralism is both opposite to monism, but also required to endorse monism. Pluralism is thus required by its definition to be compatible with those positions declaring themselves opposed to pluralism. However, one must surely agree that no theory can be 'forced' to count itself compatible with positions it disagrees with.[20] That leaves us with the paradox that either pluralism is compatible with monism, which is an inherent contradiction, or pluralism is only compatible with theories that are already non-monistic, which excludes most parts of the field in environmental ethics, exactly the opposite of what pluralism entails.

This criticism, however, also strikes any other pluralism, and can be responded to similarly. Firstly, this critique would seem to be a conflation of the ethical and metaethical level, as Such positions as Rawlsian political liberalism would seem to be possible even within a context of political monist foundationalism. Even if monist and foundational legal peers reject meta-pluralism advocating a single conception of the good society – their own – we can still promote democratic, i.e. pluralistic principles consistently, upholding that society would function better if applying tolerance between irreducible conceptions. Analogously, there should seem to be no contradiction when environmental meta-pluraliststs recommend moral monists to operate in less categorical terms.

At this level, I am not sure how much pragmatists will be concerned about such paradoxes, as it seems not to have been interfering particularly with their work. Perhaps it will say that it is exactly such theoretical problems that have been prone to stop philosophers in their tracks before, which is an ach-example of the type of problem that must simply be put aside so long

[20] This would sound like an abusive relationship to say the least.

as we see that things are working in practice. As we know, the latter option has not been the route of environmental pragmatism thus far, as it at the same time advocates to convert monists to pluralists, and also advocates the cooperation with those monists whom it is not able to convince. The paradoxical knot might perhaps be solved showing to some conflation of theoretical and meta-theoretical pluralism, if the debate between monism and pluralism primarily is a meta-theoretical debate, as meta-theoretical pluralism is not directly concerned with the correctness of first level ethical theories. If the pluralism in question is meta-theoretical, it is not self-contradictory for it to support a broad set of positions working together, where some positions amongst which will deny pluralism. However, then this problem seems to remain in the case of first level pluralism. In any case, I think this can be confusing, especially to someone new to environmental pragmatism, and I wonder if you think the different levels in the debate can be stratified better.

6.2.3 One of the more obvious answers to environmental pragmatism's general allegation towards environmental philosophy of being ineffective and having 'little tangible impact–in the "real world"' (Minteer, 2012, p. 2) is a simple denial that it has been ineffective. It is hard to operationalize and measure the total effects of environmental philosophy to the point where a clear-cut and unambiguous record of merits is feasible. We must then also assume a frame of reference with respect to how far in the causal chain we look, and then include the indeterminate causal lengths forward in time and outward in width. some other than through counterfactual speculation. In order to estimate the relative productivity of environmental philosophy to environmental causes, it is possible to argue that environmental philosophy has had a profound and pervasive relevance to the slow turning of attitudes and action seen thus far – a relevance similar to the one of other social movements which have not been as a result of its being directly adopted by a wide fraction of people, but which have nevertheless played a huge role to the long term mechanism of social change. One could contend that environmental philosophy has indeed produced results mitigated across society, however in indirect and invisible ways rather than direct and visible.

It might well be possible to do environmental philosophy without any engaged interest for environmental issues at all, as some argue (Laplante, 2004), but this attitude seems the exception among environmental philosophers.

3 Environmental systematism

A crisis conceived as a first-person moral crisis

One of the major ethical projects of environmental pragmatism has been to re-formulate it to enable a larger field of impact. To achieve this, pragmatists have mostly turned to pluralism and the abolition of classical dichotomies and of ethical foundationalism. As pragmatists widely agree with mainstream environmental theorists about the untenable character of conventional ethics, the dispute is mostly on what should be the alternative. Thus, much has been said on the meta-ethical front, as many pragmatists, particularly Weston or Minteer, have advocated going deeper in their break with old frameworks of anthropocentric ethics, than simply changing its anthropocentric content[21]. They wish to change ethics in a meta-ethical sense, to break not only with the content of previous ethics, but also with its form and structure. As this project is still in the very early stages of development, there seems to be much room for new ideas and improvement. Minteer suggests a 'third way' in environmental ethics that shrinks the antagonistic schism of anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric positions in order to facilitate a common platform for policy and practice (2006).

My contention is that there is room for an even wider notion of ethics that aims to capture what Anthony Weston calls 'the ecology of ethics' and his 'enabling environmental practice' (Weston, 1996a). If seems that any successful attempt to ‘enable environmental practise’, which according to environmental pragmatists is a prime task of environmental ethics, necessitates a holistic understanding of the mechanics of ethics on all levels, what Weston calls the ‘ecology of ethics’. This may well happen if ethics open up to an even higher level to address not only individual agency in isolation, but also agency seen in large scale at the societal level, and in the contexts that real practice and ethical conduct occur. I find that this wide approach demands a balancing of today's bottom-up, individualist, agent oriented emphasis in the orthodox conception, in favour of a more systemically oriented and top-down approach which moves its focus to the large overarching dynamics that govern individual behaviour, whether ethically deliberate or not. If ethics can already be seen as a tool for the channelling and management of

[21] Bryan Norton, as discussed, defends what he calls a ‘weak’ or ‘considered’ anthropocentrism, but this is contrasted with the ‘classical’ or strong notion. As such, it arguably serves the same efforts to disrupt and reconstruct the old frameworks mounted on the anthropocentrism-divide.

moral conduct at the level of the individual, there seems to be an absence of a correlate at the level of society. Ethics could then be concerned not only with the question of what ethical conduct entails, but also with how to bring this ethical conduct into practice to make society more ethical. I consider this in tune with the pragmatic instrumental understanding of ethical theory. Again, it seems that ethics, like environmental philosophy, will fail as a discipline if it is unable to close this circuit and apply itself in the real world.

The initial motivation for these considerations is the observation that even though environmental behaviour is considered the result of free choice and attitudes, we see systematic failure to change, which should not be expected given this current understanding. Many are highly surprised to find the lethargic response the crisis has received so far, given the moral character of human beings and given the information available. Critics are prompted to interpret the crisis as the result of either a moral crisis of human selfishness, or a lack of information and awareness. The suggestion that either of the two is the case, is no doubt good reason for surprise given what moral integrity we know human beings to be capable of and given what information on the subject has been available since serious attention to such subjects started at least five decades ago. Both result in the conclusion that further moral convincing is needed or that people need to be further informed of the reality of the crisis. When understanding people as governed by what they believe, and what they wish to accomplish – what is commonly known as the belief-desire model of action – it seems that at least one of the two parts must be missing if it be logically possible for humanity to omit significant action in response to the crisis.

However, it is seldom suggested from philosophers that it might also be neither, but that the very belief-desire model is mistaken. Still, as psychologists have known for a long time, the belief-desire model of action has had be abandoned as it has shown poor empirically accuracy in explaining and predicting behaviour. In the interdisciplinary work *Individual and Structural Determinants of Environmental Practice*, professor of philosophy Bengt Hansson notes:

> One often talks about people's actions as being determined by two things, what they want to achieve and what they know, values and facts. Consequently, we should affect their values or attitudes and provide them with new information if we want to influence their actions and behaviour. This is the misconception […] First, people very often already have the 'right' values and attitudes […] Secondly, people are quite well-informed and can seldom use much extra information in a constructive way. What has been overlooked is that behaviour, even if ultimately based on values and information, does not spring automatically from them (2003, p. 218).

Given the way we understand the moral integrity of normal human beings, there seems to be an explanatory gap to the behaviour seen. When discovering such systematic failure, it seems the crisis resulting from this failure is not simply a moral failure, but a deeper and systematic one. This point is made by Slavoj Zizek when he says: 'The question is not "are people moral enough or not", but "why can't they act in a moral way". In what social circumstances are people allowed to act upon their moral views […]' (Zizek, 12010, 7:25) If the accusation of a 'moralistic'[22] paradigm of in environmental philosophy is tenable, understood as an exclusive focus on first-person moral explanations of environmental behaviour, it is readily obvious how it risks a number of maltreatments of the real problems. Firstly it can be accused of reductionism in reducing such issues which have large and intricate psychological, social, cultural, technological or political dimensions to merely moral ones, leading in myopically individualistic approach and neglecting regard to large and small scale mechanisms. Secondly, when basing itself on such a reductive view it risks misplacing or mis-prioritizing environmental efforts that would be differently organized if problems were understood not only as a result of personal convictions and personal actions. Thirdly, it may neglect the possibility that pervasive and stable behavioural changes may still fail to occur even if there could be waged an effective campaign to change people's moral convictions. As I will argue bellow, both psychological and sociological assumptions that cannot be justified may have been committed, as research in these fields show that behaviour is not linearly predictable or attributable to attitudes alone, but are subject to an intricate web of interpersonal social and psychological dynamics.

The alternative perspective is therefore what I will call *environmental systematism*. Systematism is the act of systematizing, or applying systemic understandings. *Environmental* systematism as I will use it here denotes the attempt to understand environmental problems and behaviours through their systemic features. This includes synergetic considerations into the causal understanding of action employed by environmental ethics. Following the general themes of environmental pragmatism, such as empiricism or holism, it attempts to move the perspective of ethics from the bottom-up first-person outlook to the top-down third-person

[22] The accusation of 'moralism' is a common one against environmentalists, but it is intended here not in the derogatory sense employed by libertarians or so-called 'environmental sceptics' to oppose the idea of morality itself or social correction in general. Rather it indicates the preference for moral causal explanations of behaviour, which is often taken to the exclusion of other causal factors and perspectives.

systemic perspective. Systematism then involves the notion that ethical cognition or environmental action in large scale is not reducible to simplistic causal explanations or to free-willist volition, but must be understood and analysed as a whole through the many complex large and small systems that spawn it. This includes both the external societal and social systems in which the agent is embedded and act in relation to; and the internal psychological systems or mechanisms that sciences like cognitive psychology are just beginning to chart. Environmental systematism here terms an approach that focuses on discovering these systems, both those internal and external to the agent, in determining how to disrupt and tweak them to yield better environmental output. It is recognizing that behaviour, although largely understandable through the moral perceptions that underlie it, is also in a mutual feedback-loop with attitudes and moral perceptions. Systematism then suggests that both are the result of many intricate causal relations, or 'systems', factors going far beyond the facts and values held by moral agents, and factors that must be analyzed holistically in connection to other moral agents and the dynamics manifesting between them in society.

As argued earlier, conventional environmental ethics through the last 30 or more years has been paradigmatically united not only by its similar content, but also through its core meta-ethical understanding of the very task of ethics, such as laid out by Callicott or Katz. Environmental pragmatists have so far been set to change not only this first-order content of ethics philosophically but also to challenge its surrounding meta-ethical format, in order break free of the old frameworks they deem inept to tackle the crisis at the systemic level. However, it seems to me these meta-ethical ideas may be extrapolated further via the system oriented approach to ethics, in an effort to apply holism not only to the patients of ethics, but also its agents.

3.1 The psycho-behavioural thesis

As should be clear from the above, environmental pragmatists have invested much energy into investigating the evaluative thesis, and the concept of intrinsic value. However, the psycho-behavioural thesis, as described by Brennan and Lo (2011) has been devoted considerably less attention as the second major assumption of environmental philosophy:

> [M]uch of the last three decades of environmental ethics has been spent analysing, clarifying and examining the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism, which has now achieved a nearly canonical status within the discipline. By contrast, the psycho-behavioural thesis is seldom discussed, but is part of the tacit background of environmental ethics. (2011)

The psycho-behavioural thesis, as the name suggests, regards the causal connection between beliefs and behaviour with regard to environmental attitudes, and contains deep philosophical roots, as I will argue, in an underlying view of moral agency based on human freedom and moral autonomy. More precisely, as defined by Brennan and Lo, the psycho-behavioural thesis is 'the claim that people who believe in the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism are more likely to behave environmentally (i.e., behave in beneficial ways, or at least not in harmful ways, towards the environment) than those who do not' (2011). Although it is rarely discussed explicitly, it is also fundamental to the motivation of environmental philosophy's core self-understanding as formulated by Callicott or Katz. Brennan and Lo argues:

> If the psycho-behavioural thesis is true, then it is important in two ways: (1) it provides a rationale for both the diagnosis and solution of environmental problems, and (2) it gives practical justification to the discipline of environmental ethics itself (conceived as the mission to secure converts to the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism). (2011)

According to them, the common structure of much of environmental philosophy, therefore, has been based upon a pathology of the environmental crisis that assumes anthropocentric attitudes as its primary cause, and therefore attempts in turn to locate the source of anthropocentrism. The common structure of argument, according to Brennan and Lo goes like this:

(1) X causes anthropocentrism (X replacing sorts of alienation of nature, e.g. Christendom (White, 2008), disenchantment (Abram, 2012), or domination/patriarchy (Warren, 2008)
(2) Anthropocentrism leads to environmentally damaging behaviours.
(3) Therefore, X is the origin of environmental crisis (Brennan & Lo, 2011).

Brennan and Lo seem to omit a step between (2) and (3) which I think is worth including, namely the causal connection between behaviour and environmental problems. A somewhat similar construction of the argument, which I will discuss in the following, ends up with 3 causal assumptions and one conclusion:

(1) Exposure to facts and values is the origins of attitudes.
(2) Attitudes are the origins of behaviour.
(3) Behaviour is the origin of the environmental problems.
(4) Therefore, to remove the cause of environmental problems we must expose people to new facts and values.

The third premise might be the safest step of the three, but a qualification of the term 'behaviour' is necessary before it can be granted, as it would have to go beyond the most voluntary and freely chosen sense of *action*. I claim that actions in the narrow sense, which includes only those most restrictive forms of deliberative and self-caused behaviour, cannot be attributed as the single, or even as the greatest, cause of environmental problems. It must rather include all human doings over time, including those which are provoked by the various degrees of necessity arising within institutions built without environmental awareness. When certain environmentally bad behaviours have been systemically integrated into the fabric of society we are forced to operate with a behavioural term that spans the entire spectrum from voluntary to involuntary action. We must admit that not all environmentally detrimental actions in the wide sense are subject to be halted by a mere abstaining from those actions. Vocational airplane travel, for instance, is not as much a free action as eating meat or conserving energy, although they are all part of 'behaviour'. The institutional equivalent is pointing out the impeded ability of developing countries in 'acting' sustainably when comparing to developed countries with stronger resources available to do so. As long as sustainability is a facet of development, it makes little sense to demand is as though being a feature of agency, although granted that if all inhabitants of any nation magically were to drop dead, all their damaging doings would immediately cease as well. With this understanding of what counts as 'behaviour', the third premise seems *prima facie* acceptable.

Moving on to premises (1) and (2) it seems these nicely sum up the psycho-behavioural thesis that «people who believe in the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism are more likely to behave environmentally […] than those who do not»[23]. The assumption, provided this is an accurate representation of the underlying rationale of environmental ethics, is that providing new information and moral argument will ultimately change people's behaviour. In a pragmatic sense this seems to be an overly atomistic an rigid model that does not account for the many dynamic features of behaviour that are nowhere near fitting in this common sense belief-desire model of behaviour.

However not only pragmatic theorists oppose the thought that averse environmental behaviour will stop if only the individuals doing them think that they should. The strategy of brute ethical persuasion to attain behavioural change has lately also become contested terrain for several

[23] The first premise is not explicitly included in Brennan and Lo's formulation, but I take it as implicit in the intention to give a general description of environmental ethics.

psychologists and political philosophers like Anders Biel and Bengt Hansson. A pertinent question is whether the ethical revolution regarding environmental issues really can come in the form ethical missioning and gradual securing of moral converts as arguably conceived in the regular approach. This may indeed have worked in the past with other social movements for instance against racial, sexual, or gender based inequalities. However, we know from experience that they are long and slow, perhaps spanning centuries of social corroboration before substantive and infrastructural changes occur.

There is no denying the long-term effects of substantial and sustained moral work, as this type of sustained effort – the moral effort – is obviously magnificently important and necessary to any deep social change. There is also no denying that important feats have been achieved in environmental terms in the last 50 years. However, we might have guessed that this readjustive and adaptive work would likely require more time with this approach that what was deemed available given the fact of rapid destructions and irredeemable damages that need to stop much more quickly. The empirical evidence of the last half century of environmental struggles makes increasingly clear that people respond to such factual and ethical persuasions quite differently than what would be assumed from the simple and rationalistic belief-desire model of behaviour. As the same information and appeals to action are repeated over and over, responses are often scattered or inclined towards desensitization and detachment, rather than adjustment. As mentioned previously, environmental concern is even appearing do decline in various places on the earth (Tangeland, 2013). In this frame, and given the disappointments of environmental philosophers, it seems empirically justified to challenge the undisputed approach to environmentalism based on the psycho-behavioural thesis and the attempt to influence moral perceptions. The ethical program of environmentalism has thus been criticized for its over-simplicity or its overt disregard for systematic and structural features in the formation of large-scale behaviour. Stated in the argumentative form above makes it easily assessable. Predictably, I will argue in the following that both assumption (1) and (2) in the reconstructed argument are problematic and not a very accurate model of real moral dynamics, as I believe the formation of moral attitudes is a highly complex and dynamic subject in itself, and the formation of behaviour equally so.

3.1.1 Sensitivity of attitudes to moral persuasion

We proceed with assumption (1) from above: Psychologically, fundamental values are long known to be connected to personality and is thus relatively stable over time. Thus fundamental values get more resistant to new impulses once such attitudes and personality have settled after early years. As social scientists such as Elias Dinas show that although attitudes can change in light of new information, they are often based upon more resilient fundamental values that harden during the 'impressionable years' of early life in the same manner as political or religious affiliations: 'When taken as a whole, the findings speak in favor of a particular pattern of attitudinal crystallization, namely that proposed by the Impressionable Years thesis […]'(Dinas, 2010, p. 9) Psychologist John Bargh further states that:

> Evidence is mounting that we are not as in control of our judgments and behavior as we think we are. Unconscious or 'automatic' forms of psychological and behavioral processes are those of which we tend to be unaware, that occur without our intention or consent, yet influence us on a daily basis in profound ways. Automatic processes influence our likes and dislikes for almost everything […](Bargh, 2007, Abstract)

This seems to contradict the first premise that presupposes moral action as predominantly autonomous, governed by the free, independent and rational consideration of facts and moral values, and of being unrelated to factors of age, gender, social situatedness, and so forth. We see that this simple model is not what empirically proves to be the case. Ethical agency in practise is not well fitting with the idealistic rationalist conception. As we like to consider moral agents as rational autonomous beings sensitive to new information and ethical deliberation, we miss the social and psychological dimensions of attitude formation, and the fact that most such deliberation takes place unconsciously. Views on the nature of agency based on unconditional freedom tends to treat mental values and decision-making as a black box (Dinas, 2010, p. 9) of free will and internalize the origins of all mental states accepting no excuse from outside causes, a view that obviously risks preventing our looking for other means to change it. Luckily, the widespread perception that human beings freely choose all their reasons for actions, or that the reasons for action is always the real cause of the action is now coming under heavy scrutiny from the perspectives of psychology and social sciences. Bargh further writes:

> When social psychology began to "go cognitive" in the 1970s it was nearly universally assumed that the cognition in question was conscious and deliberate, that people were aware of how they made judgments,

> and aware as well of the influential inputs of those judgments. This assumption seemed so intuitively obvious and "commonsensical" that few thought to question it – but fortunately, someone did […] (2007, p. 1)

This new understanding of human behaviour appears to flourish in all other anthropological sciences but philosophy, which still lags behind in insisting to ground ethical discussions on the outdated view of autonomy and human agency. It is tempting in particular to attribute this approach to agency to the dominant views in the formative years of environmental philosophy in the 1960s and to a considerable inertia in updating views in accordance with models of higher explanatory power and scientific research into real ethical deliberation. Strict moral expectations toward the individual to bear all responsibility for its perceptions and beliefs, implying ethical libertarianism, associations go to such mid-century intellectual movements as existentialism, epitomized in Sartre, like in his famous quote: '[…] man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders' (Sartre, 1993, p. 553). Ironically, in this respect it might seem ethics, or environmental ethics in particular, is susceptible to the same inertia to new attitude formation as the general public it seeks to address.

In want of the corresponding shift to take place in philosophy and ethics, current ethical theories, understood as regulatory devises for behaviour, often fail to encompass the larger structures within which action takes place as it assumes actions and attitudes to be made with a greater degree of freedom and individual choice than what increasingly proves to be the case. The dominant ethical theories seem instead one-sidedly directed towards individual initiative and a will-based, inwards search for resources to make better choices, rather than to look outward for structural determinants of action and the dynamics of attitude change.

This can be interpreted as a continued overestimation of human moral rationality still at play. The re-evaluation of traditional ethics at the onset of environmental ethics may have been only half-way completed with the break from anthropocentrism, as it elevated the status of nature towards the human condition, but at the same time forgot to *lower* its esteem of the human condition towards that of nature. The ethical discrepancy between human and non-human was addressed solely by reconsidering and elevating nature, but not reconsidering humanity itself and its elevated status as divinely autonomous and inscrutable. Humanity's predictably elevated self-understanding remained equally *enchanted* in the views of philosophers, and thus equally separated from nature by way of its definition as a fundamentally rational being, defining non-rational influence as the exception, rather than the rule.

Currently, however, it may in any case seem clear that the conduct of human beings is not as dependent upon and dictated by ethical rationality as many environmental ethicists would think. When asked to explain their actions people will generally report their *reasons* to do them, and not what *caused* them to do them. This folk-psychological conflation of the categories 'reason for action' and 'cause of action', assuming they are one and the same, might be reflected in the way environmental ethics attempts to change action by addressing reasons rather than causes. Whereas the one is (mostly) translucent and readily available to the agent, the other is not, even if the first obviously affects the other greatly. Accordingly, this is not an argument that moral values and beliefs are fixated and unalterable by way of argument to reasons and to rational ethical persuasion, but it is an argument that aims to modify any assumed easiness with which we may expect arguments regarding fundamental attitudes to be accepted. The omission of the equally salient human *irrationality*, and its ethical and epistemological dependence on psychological, cultural, sociological or political structures in which the subject is embedded is conspicuous at best, but increasingly dangerous from a consequential point of view if not adjusted when used to solving the currently most pressing concerns of humanity.

3.1.2 Sensitivity of behaviour to moral attitudes

The second part of the equation is assumption (2) and on the causal role of attitudes and beliefs to action. It seems here we may equally invoke psychological knowledge to rebut the common sense idea that attitudes linearly predict behaviour and that behaviour is determined by attitude. Assumption (2) in the psycho-behavioural thesis is that of the causal role of attitudes; the assumption that *knowing is doing* – that is if people individually are only of the right opinion, they will start acting to bring about its implications. This linear model of behaviour as in a 1 to 1 relationship with a person's convictions will – like with many other dualisms – quickly activate the pragmatist suspicion of over-simplification.

In contrast to the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism, the psycho-behavioural thesis is much more explicitly disputed throughout other academic disciplines, although widely ignored within philosophical communities. The psycho-behavioural thesis then roughly translates to the assumption that human attitudes in relation to nature are the sufficient cause of environmental

problems. The role of attitudes in relation to behaviour, which is often assumed to be in a direct linearly causal relationship is disputed for instance by Biel, et. al. who 'shows how behaviours with negative or positive environmental effects are often performed without such consequences in mind' (2003, back description). As mentioned in the first chapter, Brennan and Lo remark how environmental philosophers 'all seem to have one view in common: that anthropocentrism is at the heart of the problem of environmental destructiveness' (2011). However, the reverse is seldom suggested; that anthropocentrism may also be caused by people's actions. Psychological theories of the formation of attitudes show that this is likely the case and that a dynamical and reciprocal process without clear and distinct starting-point is at play. When people strive to maintain cognitive congruence and avoid cognitive dissonance between actions and attitudes, both actions and attitudes are subject to change in light of the other, suggesting that they are not in a one-way relationship to each other. When people in environmentally unfriendly structural contexts perceive themselves as acting contrary to their environmental values and beliefs, it is easier to attempt to justify the behaviour and modify their values and attitudes than to change behaviour within the social and infrastructural frameworks that support and facilitate it. When it is thus easier to change attitudes than to change actions, we may see how the former may lose in contexts where environmentally friendly behaviour requires large effort or sacrifice compared to the defaults of society. This is not to say that attitudes are in any deterministic relation so societal structures or that people have no direct conscious control of their actions, but it means that the linear causation model depicted in the argument above should be replaced with one of mutual feedback.

3.2 Ethical agent holism

3.2.1 Supplementing the bottom-up approach

The last 50 years have been a rough period in ethics, since this is the second time a call for radical restructuring of ethics has been heard since the proper onset of environmentalism. It might seem to undergo a ruthless adaptive selection process akin to what Slavoj Zizek calls

'crisis as shock therapy' (2009a, p. 17). Modern ethical systems and theories seem to get tested ever more frequently against new types of situations and with regard to how we want them to function, after which they are either corroborated or abolished. Upon seeing that conventional ethics failed in accounting for our intuitions about nature, they had to be supplemented or replaced with non-anthropocentric theories, just as Newtonian physics were discovered to be incomplete upon the discovery of relativity in the early 20th century. According to environmental pragmatists we are now faced with another dysfunction of ethics, that also non-anthropocentric ethics does not seem to ameliorate, namely the failure to penetrate and influence human conduct and function as a corrective tool in the Aristotelian sense of ethics[24], which many believe is also a prime task of ethical theory. The current approach to ethics is conductive of realism in the sense that it advocates more empirically founded models of real practical reasoning to the effect of successfully influence this reasoning. This 'realism' is not necessarily indicating compromise, however, as in the usual accusation that non-anthropocentric ethics go too far or that what is 'right' should step aside to what is 'reasonable' or achievable. Rather, it simply suggests the opposite of not-working-in-practise idealism, namely a different and scientifically informed approach to attaining such goals in accordance with the best of our knowledge on how real socio-political individual and structural change really happens. It is realism in the sense that it seeks to most accurately describe and account for the real conditions and workings of whatever it takes as its object of concern.

The starting point of usual ethics can be rightfully described to lie with the individual, as this appears the most obvious point to discover agency. Commonly conceived, individuals are the proper authors of ethical agency, and being a singular ethical agent is both the necessary and sufficient requirement for ethical agency to occur. Quite naturally, if environmental ethics is a branch of ethics in this sense, there cannot be any other starting point than the individual agent, and the question of 'what ought one do' becomes nearly synonymous with the question of 'how can we do what we ought to do'. When the individual is taken in isolation and seen as the sufficient and necessary cause of moral action, knowing the answer to the first question presupposes the answer to the second, namely that the individual must simply choose to do what is required by the ought-question. However, as I have argued, the individual is not in fact self-sufficient in its ethical deliberation, and the answer to how it can change its agency is not automatically given by knowing *that* it should do so, as seemingly presupposed by more agent-

[24] More on this below.

intensive ethical systems dominated by moral imperatives. When seeing agency as an exclusive feature of the individual, it does not seem weird that resolving environmental issues are usually pictured as moving from the bottom up, as in in grass-root organisation or engaging in sustainable consumption based on personal actions and personal responsibility. It seems this agent intensive, bottom-up approach to ethics can be limiting to where responsibility is put and where agency is expected to happen. This bottom-up approach to agency, it seems to me, can amount to a sort of hand-to-mouth environmentalism that has very little systemic stability when depending on the sustained idealistic support and effort of its supporters.

Top-down systemic approaches to interpreting environmental problems, which contrast with moral private-enterprise-approaches have begun to emerge as well. With their explanatory perspective at the systemic level, they do not see solutions to environmental problems as coming primarily from within individual agents, but look to higher systems with a wide basis in political or social levels. Such writers as or Murray Bookchin with his social ecology, Garrett Hardin with this game-theoretical considerations, or Slavoj Zizek, who analyses the ecological dimensions in capitalism, all entertain an institutional approach to environmental issues that move focus away from the free will of moral individuals in understanding why individuals behave the way they do. The role of moral imperative or responsibility on behalf of the individual is toned down also in Arne Næss, who pursues a holistic experience approach to ethics. In fact, Næss even avoids the term 'ethics' in his writings:

> 'Naess and Sessions have emphatically emphasized the phenomenological spirit of deep ecology and downplayed dicta; the psychological realization of metaphysical holism makes ethics superfluous. As Naess has said, ''I'm not much interested in ethics or morals. I'm interested in how we experience the world. . . . ''' (Keller, 2009)

There is a scent here of Aristotelian ethics in the way moral practical reason cannot be viewed as a learned set of abstract principles, but rather must be viewed as an acquired habitual mode of spontaneous intuitive reaction, not dependent in each case on a rational calculation (cf. Kraut, 2014). The pragmatic project of re-formulating ethics resembles this dynamic conception. Here, I try to broaden this re-formulation by looking for an even wider notion of ethics that turns away from the focus on theoretical moral reasoning all-together and aims to capture the spontaneous intuitive nature of moral reasoning in everyday life that does not normally involve abstract theoretical reasoning.

This wider notion of ethics seeks to encompass the social situatedness that make up the large scale structures of moral reasoning in society, capturing what Anthony Weston calls 'the ecology of ethics' and his 'enabling environmental practice' (Weston, 1996a, p. 140). I claim that ethics can already be seen as a tool for the channelling and management of moral conduct at the bottom-up level of the individual. If this is the case, there seems to be an absence of the correlate from the top-down level of society which attempts to channel moral conduct starting from the large scale structures and working down. I suggest that pragmatic ethics may open to this higher level if it is not only concerned with individual agency in isolation, but also with agency seen as relational and in aggregate, the same way it sees for instance value as relational and in aggregate. In this way, both the agent and the patient of ethical theory can be treated in the same holistic regard. This continuation of the pragmatic bringing-to-practice ethics is thus not only concerned with the question of *what* types of conduct are ethical, but also with *how* to bring this ethical conduct into practice to make society more ethical.

Indeed from the consequential point of view of environmental pragmatism we may argue that a main goal of ethics must be to make itself superfluous. If people already perceive the world in such a way as to act morally by inclination, or in such a way that the moral intuitions that precede the abstractions of ethical theory are already innate, then no law or overarching principles are required to sustain this moral conduct. ‘Superfluous’, of course, is a strong term, but it captures the sense in which it is no longer vital to stable, long term sustenance of conduct and in which correct conduct is no longer dependent on it, in the same way that ethical principles are not needed to cultivate an ethical attitude in the Aristotelian sense. The need for such rules first arises when there is a need to communicate, to teach or to resolve dispute of different principles or pre-theoretical intuitions. Much in the same sense as grammatical understanding is unnecessary to a child’s first language acquisition, but first needed in the appropriation of a foreign language, so also are abstract ethical rules first needed where innate intuitions and attitudes are insufficient or conflicting. True, the assimilation and socialisation of both language and morals, both early in life and later, is dependent upon the continual correction and exposure to principles, but said socialisation is first and foremost a product of social embedding and not of principles. The further away from situated context any such appropriation is set to occur – the more artificial the learning, so to speak – the higher the role of abstract principle and the lower the role of socialisation. These principles function to convey such moral through rational or emotional deliberation, much in the same way as deliberation into a logical problem may function as to make intuitive what was before not intuitive, and may convey such intuitions

between agents so as to coordinate and correct the total body of intuitions or moral perceptions to enable cooperation and unity in the moral traffic rules in society as a whole.

The moral reasoning of environmental ethics tends to use the language of individualism, and tends to address the individual moral agent disjoint from the rest of society, in many ways resembling other individualist social or philosophical outlooks. The self-sufficiency of the individual to bear full responsibility for its interactions with the world, and the inherent emphasis on the individual's freedom to control these interactions seem also to be another aspect of collective agreement within environmental ethics. It might be one standing in stark contrast to the usual holistic outlooks that dominate environmental ethics, which tone down individual parts and emphasize the structural and functional facets of natural systems. I would argue that the ethical model adopted by environmental ethics, which focuses on individual choices in the same way as other ethical systems, is based on a belief-desire model of action which has, as argued above, outright been shown to be false.

The pragmatic project of refocusing and re-formulating ethics has already taken several departures from both conventional ethics and environmental ethics. Rather than a new position within the established frame, environmental pragmatists seek to expand the notion of ethics itself into one that turns away from the established core ideas as conventionally conveived, such as inherent value, means and ends, and centeredness. In light of this, I want to suggest a further expanding on the reevaluation of ethics provided by environmental pragmatists. This conception attempts to even more thoroughly broaden the horizon beyond the mere dealing in moral obligations and rights.

The classical question of individualism versus holism in today's debate is usually confined to that which regards ethical *patients* and the question of whether ethical regard is due solely to the individuals it regards, or also to the aggregate systems themselves, which are comprised of individuals. However, as ethical patients are enthusiastically debated throughout the literature, there seems to be a blind spot regarding the question of the ethical *agents*. True, the concept of agency is already expanding into the non-human realm, as certain other animals, well after their inclusion as moral patients, are now exceedingly recognized for their rational, emotional and moral capabilities qua agents, as scientists discover ever more of their cognitive resemblances to humans in their ability for moral reasoning and a sense of selfless justice. (de Waal, 2011; Ghose, 2012).

However, a different question is also needed: Is ethical agency and responsibility moral properties necessarily exclusive to individual beings? Can it be meaningful to ascribe a degree of moral normativity[25] to greater bodies of human individuals, a normativity that is not reducible to the sum of responsibilities held by the individuals? Ethical theorists all silently appear to agree that individual agents can be the only proper bearers of ethical attitudes, and the only valid recipient of ethical argument. By extension of the usual notion of ethical individualism versus holism with respect to ethical patients, there seems to emerge a notion of an *ethical agent individualism*; in other words the attitude that ethical agency first and foremost must reside within the isolated individual. I want to stipulate the alternative view that can be termed *ethical agent holism*. It is based upon a systematist approach to action and ethics, namely the view that ethical action must be understood as parts of wholes, and must arise in one sense *collectively*, breaking with previous patterns and structural determinants of behaviour, whatever they may be. In this sense agency and responsibility becomes as much an attribute of social, cultural and political systems as it is of individual persons.

3.2.2 The banality of environmental behaviour

This notion is useful in the following. If, as so far argued, we must agree that the individual is limited in certain substantial ways, and therefore cannot assume the total responsibilities often ascribed to it, it seems that this responsibility must be assigned elsewhere, insofar as the responsibility and urgency to change the damaging relationships to nature remains equally strong. This responsibility, I argue, may be directed at the collective level. I have so far presupposed an understanding of responsibility that distributes responsibility in proportion to the ease with which this responsibility can be carried. If a person is not capable of fulfilling its demands, they cannot be held responsible for failing to do so. Equally, if a person *is* capable of fulfilling these demands, but only with slight chance of success, or with great cost and effort, the responsibility must be proportionally mitigated, just as judicial punishment is mitigated by the degree to which the accused may have acted otherwise. As long as there are predispositions, we understand that it will be more likely for someone to do a particular thing in question than otherwise. This is especially true when counting averages of many people. When considering for instance crime rates, high or low measures are rarely attributed to moral strength or weakness, but is rather seen as a symptomatic of something else, for instance social conditions

[25] I refrain from using ‘duty’ as this seems to imply a starker absolute sense beyond the normative ‘ought’ I am looking for.

or other structural circumstances likely to affect general lawfulness. It seems like high crime-rates are not entirely accounted for by the combined moral blame of the individual offenders. There seems to be circumstantial conditions as well, prompting crime higher than would be expected from an average population. Considering a similar example of, say, a crossroads with particularly high rates of accidents might evoke our suspicion that inattention or human error, although applicable to each individual case, is still not the whole story. Here also it seems the fault is not entirely with the individual agents, as they seem influenced by unfair odds from the beginning.

Answering to these societal examples of system bias we have many different cases in point from each individual's psychological perspective: The *bystander-effect* and *diffusion of responsibility* are different examples of behavioural phenomena only seemingly related to morality, but which proves to be due rather to structural set-up. The popular textbook example is the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese that was allegedly witnessed by 38 neighbours without anyone taking action (Passer et al., 2008, pp. 38–43)[26]. While we are lead to believe that such failure to take action is indeed only attributable to moral failure, test subjects in research on diffusion of responsibility and the bystander-effect never display particular moral apathy in general and in most other areas of life, but rather prove to be normal average law abiding citizens. In social psychology and sociology we see countless examples of how surrounding groups make reference points against which each individual orients themselves and moderates their action.

Such dynamics are for instance *group conformity*, and *authority obedience*. These show the unintuitive extent to which beliefs and behaviour of individuals systematically conform to the norms of its group, and demonstrate the strength of the systematic barriers towards dissent most people experience in a social group or community. The well-known experiments of Solomon Ash in the 1950s, that demonstrated the effects of conformity to a group despite better knowledge, and Stanley Milgram's infamous authority obedience experiments in 1961, in which participants are requested by an authority figure to administer up to lethal electrical shocks to another fake participant, both demonstrate this enormous influential power of the social environment (Asch, 1951; Milgram, 1963). Philip Zimbardo's famous Stanford Prison Study of 1971 further demonstrated the effects of group identity and the situational formation

[26] It was later suggested that the story may have been exaggerated through lofty new-reports of the incident, but corroborative reproductions of similar effects abound in the literature (cf. Hogg & Vaughan, 2008, pp. 541–546).

of attitudes and behaviour, and the particular ways attitudes intensify depending on perceived in-group norm (2008). These findings were later used to study similar incidents, like the famous scandal of the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in which soldiers of the American invasion forces started exercising abuse and seemingly unmotivated torture against prisoners (Zimbardo, 2008).

The results of both Milgram and Zimbardo's findings support the external situational, rather than internal dispositional attribution of behaviour, which may be extended to environmental behaviour as well. These examples are all telling of the major hidden influences that are ignored when demanding social change to start from the individual. When there are no major norms against carbon intensive transportation, for instance, group conformity is likely to hold back the formation and consolidation of this attitude. This makes for great difficulties in breaking with the established social norms and practises relating to environmental elements. The practise of vegetarianism is a different example that requires very high social independence and moral integrity to arise within any community of carnivorism that may provide little to no support and reinforcement of such divergences. Arguably a great amount of similar examples relevant to environmental outcomes rest on such dynamics, as religious, cultural or political attitudes in a social group are tightly knit together. When social convergence plays such a heavy role, it takes a strong individual influence to budge the attitude of the group at large, and the group in aggregate will be very resistant to change.

Having investigated the dynamics of behind both good and bad behaviour in the social context, Zimbardo later coined the phrase 'the banality of heroism' in reference to the opposite of Hannah Arendt's phrase 'the banality of evil'. In Arendt's report from the trial of Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann, she undertakes to show the dynamics of evil behaviour and how it must be understood differently from the common understanding of revealing extraordinary moral character, fanaticism or sociopathy. Eichmann was not a monster, she claims, as his actions and willingness to follow genocidal orders are fully compatible with normal moral capacities, a perspective often used in a wider sense to understand the historical context of National Socialism and how it was allowed to flourish throughout a whole nation of otherwise average and morally literate individuals (cf. Arendt, 1963). It is in this setting we might extend Arendt's phrase to a sense in which environmental behaviour may also be considered banal, and how its many manifestations, must be considered not primarily as results of individual moral initiative or value attitudes towards nature, but may understood at a systemic level which ultimately may allow for the alteration or manipulation of such systems.

3.2.3 Redistributing responsibility

Evidence shows that strong predispositions make the individual persons start with a significant handicap, even if regarded as free in the usual sense relevant to ethics. To distribute responsibility in this understanding, we need to ask at what level the responsibility is likely best handled or managed. We avoid the many systemic or psychological traps in which correct or moral behaviour is bound to lose by rather asking who or what is most suitable for the job. The greater the power to fulfil successfully the tasks posed by particular responsibilities, the greater the responsibility we ascribe to that level. If we find that certain institutions or bodies of people have greater power to change courses of events than the sum of its individual parts, it follows that this body must be ascribed a responsibility and agency that goes above and beyond that of its individual human constituents. I wish to argue that there is more than enough compensation for admitting lesser human freedom, lying in the different organisational levels of human societies; from the smallest circles of community to the very largest at the national and international levels.

When moving away from the particularities of the individualistic moral perspective, on to the macroscopic dynamics of the crisis, the nature of the problems seem to present themselves from whole new sides which are unavailable from the myopic confines of the individualistic moral focus. This perspective would argue that it makes as little sense to attribute environmental guilt or blame when moving the focus to the level of, say, the nation state, any more than it makes sense to charge a society with having high crime rates. The question then, is how to bring these rates down. The very concept of moral blame tends to deflate and loose meaning as soon as this shift of perspective occurs. From this level of analysis the approach of individualistic moral reprehension seems to be inapt and misplaced, as the issues from the large scale perspective appear to be social, political or even psychological struggles, and not primarily moral ones. The systematist perspective, however, must ot be taken at the expencce of moral statements, or understood as in denying the validity of moral statements to the benefit of systemic and impersonal mechanical explanations, but it suggests supplementing it with the equally valid large scale system oriented perspective to arrive at a holistic picture of the causal dynamics at play. It promotes understanding both the top-down systematist and bottom-up individualist framing of agency as mutually informing and dialectically evolving through the other. Both then become compatible and equally valid description of the same. It seems very clear that any accurate description is impossible from only one perspective, as it from the experience of

environmentalism thus far seems clear that we cannot moralize our way out of our problems. As Garrett Hardin puts it:

> 'Moralists try to achieve desired ends by exhorting people to be moral. They seldom succeed; and the poorer the society (other things being equal) the less their success. Institutionalists try to achieve desired ends by the proper design of institutions, allowing for the inescapable moral imperfection of the people on whose services institutions depend.' (Hardin, 2008b, p. 355) [27]

My claim is that both a moralist and institutionalist explanations are needed to completely encompass the full array of interplay between the levels.

It is worth recognizing that this type of responsibility distribution might conflict with the most common norms of distributive justice and responsibility. The current approach implies moving from responsibility distribution based on equity from personal environmental input, to one based on distribution from potential output. In other words, we will move from the distribution model where each person is responsible for their own private share of environmental impact to one suggesting that total impact is collected and distributed across society according to ability. Each person or societal organ is given responsibility according to what is within their reasonable capacity to carry, replacing the individualist capitalist mantra of 'to each what is owed' with the more holistic and collectivist slogan 'from each according to his ability'. We move from the individualist thinking that requires each individual to make up for its own personal contribution, to one where each individual and each collection of individuals is required to do *what it can*. This stops us from expecting contributions where they consistently fail to be seen, and allows us to expect more from other areas of unexploited potential for contribution. Such principles, as long recognized for the distribution of goods and burdens in social economies, may be applied to the distribution of responsibilities itself in a planned effort to bring society's collective sum of environmental virtues and vices to a positive value. If it is true that atomism and individualism in our view on responsibility and agency is part of the problem, we should perhaps consider this new sort of 'economy' for responsibility: If it appears that the budgeting of responsibility places too large a burden on certain areas where responsibilities consistently

[27] The reason I don't adopt the term 'institutionalism' instead of 'systematism' is that I want the phrase to encompass all levels of systemic dynamics and not be limited to 'institutions'; and also that 'institutionalism' in Hardin's coinage seems to imply an institution perspective *at the cost of* the non-institutional or moral perspectives, which is not what is intend here. As both moral regards *and* institutional dynamics must be included for a complete picture of the systems ultimately resulting in environmental behaviour, no one perspective should be taken as replacing others as long as they all provide valid causal perspectives.

fail to be met, and too small a burden on areas where it could be larger, it is clear that we must consider the distribution faulty, and that adjustments must be made to maximise the environmental output of the system.

3.3 Institutionalist accounts

Several detached philosophical contributions on a range of systemic motives pertaining to environmental issues have turned up from outside the epicentres of the environmental philosophy debate. Notably, as the top-down approaches to environmental issues are often given second priority within more traditionally environmental philosophical circles, political philosophy theorists analysing the political dimensions of the crisis often pick up this thread. However, it seems to me that these systemic considerations may need to be implemented in the environmental philosophy debate if the systematist account qua environmental philosophy is to have its due. I wanted to give mention to some of these perspectives without going into elaborate detail. Many discuss the role of capitalism and raise questions to whether capitalist economics and ideology constitute a viable system allowing environmental issues. John Stuart Mill's 'In Defence of Steady-State Economics', for instance, argued that growth-based economics is logically forced at some point to readjust to a non-growth model, so long there are limits to total growth (2008).

Many have, of course, impeached capitalism as one of the prime suspects. Arguably essential forces connected to capitalism, such as perpetual growth, increased consummation, mass production alienation and competitive individualism is often identified both as a cause of anthropocentrism and as a direct cause of environmental damage in itself. Radical social critics such as Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek even go so far as to claim that the current attempts to tackle the 21st century environmental problems from within the same liberal capitalist system from which the problems originated, inherently carry along the same flaws as gave rise to the problems. He contends further that ecology, rather than representing a scientific tool towards sustainability, has become a new secular religion substitute as founded on the Christian notion of the primordial fall and the loss of moral purity. He, echoing Murray Bookchin, laments how 'reunion with wilderness and Mother Earth' has become the prevailing narrative of ecological

redemption (Zizek, 2009a, p. 97). The capitalist and new-spiritualist reception given to environmental problems has resulted in symbolic rites or sacrificial behaviour which thus unfortunately is motivated falsely and becomes ineffective against the real and big problems:

> What is really difficult for us to accept […] is that we are reduced to the purely passive role of an impotent observer who can only sit back and watch what his fate will be. To avoid such a situation, we are prone to engage in frenetic, obsessive activity – recycling paper, buying organic food, or whatever – just so that we can be sure that we are doing something. Making our contribution, like a soccer fan who supports his team in front of a TV screen at home, shouting and jumping up from his seat, in the superstitious belief that it will somehow influence the outcome. (Žižek, 2011, pp. 424–423)

Such 'frantic obsessive activities' are illustrating of our approach to the crisis so far, according to Zizek, as we engage in environmentalism subconsciously motivated not by what really matters, but by what can make us feel like making a difference. By extension of Zizeks remarks we can recognize how the target of our actions on behalf of environmentalism quickly becomes not that with the largest possible output, but the dissipation of our anxiety through the cheapest means possible. The result may be plastic recycling or buying ecological tea but by that very same token feeing justified to buy the extra holiday airplane ticked. As long as commercial forces are allowed to capitalise on satisfying people's desires to contribute (or more directly to dissipate their anxiety), it is in these commercial forces' best interest to minimize production cost on their part, and thus the power of their actual environmental contribution, all the while maximizing the perceived environmental relevance of their product. What then is allowed to happen is the effective dissipation of environmental anxiety on the most marginal environmental measures possible, while more environmentally relevant aspects of society are allowed to continue as status quo.

In short, the system contains a self defence mechanism, according to Zizek, in distracting people from overthrowing its core by continuously leading them on with insignificant but symbolic concessions. Quoting Oscar Wilde, Zizek explains the adverse effects of the charity institution and bottom up solutions:

> The proper aim is to try and reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible and the altruistic virtues have really prevented the carrying out of this aim. The worst slave owners were those who were kind to their slaves and so prevented the core of the system being realised by those who suffered from it […] (Zizek, 2009b)

Green consumerism, according to Zizek may be an example of such a distraction when it satisfies citizens' need to react, but without the potentially dangerous component of any significant real change. The result from allowing capitalism as the overarching context of our design of solutions becomes inherently egoistical and atomistic motivational dynamics, leading in phenomena such as so called 'green washing' or other symbolic environmental behaviour, such as Earth day, replacing real and deep measures so long as people are made to feel they make a difference.

Likewise, founder of social ecology, Murray Bookchin complains about misrepresented realities in what he calls a widespread 'mysticism' and 'quasi-religiosity' (Bookchin, 1994, p. 22). This has come to take hold of environmental philosophy, according to him, claiming that 'even as its mind is Western, its heart is uncritically eastern in its sentimentality' (Bookchin, 1995, p. 99). It is in this sense we may say that the majority of developments within the discipline today are propagated by what William James would denote as the 'tender minded' half of philosophers, in referring to those of idealistic, rationalistic and spiritualistic proclivities, preferring optimism and a priory principles to sceptical realism and factual empiricism (Hookway, 2008). Such associations may indeed come to mind when for instance Holmes Rolston 'seeks "re-creation" of the human soul by meditating in the wilderness', or when 'critical theorists believe that aesthetic appreciation of nature has the power to re-enchant human life' (Brennan & Lo, 2011, p. 35). Even without taking sides, we may readily anticipate how critics will point out that this is a poor strategy for crisis management.

If correct, such whole picture analysis seems highly relevant to a sculpting of solutions to environmental problems. If these conclusions are justified a new pressing task for philosophical analysis should be to ask how these insights affect our environmental approach, and what measures can and must be met in order to change the output of such large scale dynamics.

4 Summary and conclusions

4.1 The argument so far

I set out by investigating two commonly held assumptions of environmental philosophy; the first concerning the existence of intrinsic value in nature, and the second concerning the way people will react to persuasion of this value. I concluded both investigations with rejecting that the assumptions are absolutely true in the sense presupposed or that they provide a plausible basis for a viable environmental ethics.

The *first* main chapter deals with the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism through the lens of environmental pragmatism. It argues that the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism in the specific ways it is articulated philosophically is not necessary to achieve the desired goals of environmentalism. It argues that even though we must admit value to exist in nature independent of human beneficiaries, it is not necessary to capture the exact nature of this value before environmental theorists and laypeople alike can unite to protect it. If requiring allegiance to any particular and arbitrarily specific theory or approach, environmental pragmatists argue that environmental philosophy becomes too sectarian and demanding to function. It seems to them that any number of different value interpretations and intuitions that exist among laypeople may be sufficient for a workable ethics even if such values are not philosophically reflected or even self-consistent.

This does not need to collapse into a mere ‘management ethic’ as sometimes argued (cf. Katz in Light, 2002, p. 105) because the conception that these diverse attitudes and values are reducible to strong anthropocentrism is inaccurate. Environmental ethics should therefore draw on the many ways the environment is already valued and strengthen such values through open ended and pluralistic inquiry. Among the most salient suggestions for resolving disagreements around value consists in moving away from the understanding of value as foundational and firmly defined. The alternative would be introduced with the slogan ‘interdependence, not independence’, pointing to the holistic and dynamic character that seems lost in the atomistic independency based conceptions of value. I conclude with acknowledging Anthony Weston’s outlines of an interdependent theory of value, although remaining open and agnostic to

questions regarding the metaphysical nature and locus of value, with regards to value realism, subjectivism, value pluralism or the like.

This understanding allows an open environmental philosophy to emerge based on proprietary intuitions most humans, and certainly environmental philosophers, already share; that the environment is infused with value in its many forms and that animals, plants, habitats and species, are worth keeping and protecting. This admits that clear-cut answers in conflicts of interest become more difficult, but this is arguably compensated so long as it opens the vast unexploited potential for protection of non-human interests in the first place. If this results in a more spontaneously prudential attitude towards the values of nature, destructive tendencies might be mitigated before a *moral* ruling is needed. Then the court cases of conflicting interests are effectively turned a minority. Given that this conception is tenable, it makes the case that environmental philosophy will do well to serve a strategic and coordinative role for the practical implementation of this protection, which seems to be the difficult part, rather than to expound further on the precise reasons for this protection.

The *second* main chapter deals with my own addition to this project, and highlights some considerations to the second thesis, which has so far received surprisingly little attention from environmental pragmatists. As environmental pragmatists have painstakingly criticized both the content and importance of the evaluative thesis of non-anthropocentrism, they seem to either ignore or endorse the psycho-behavioural thesis. In this respect, it risks not to take full strategic advantage of a system-oriented approach. Here I feel environmental pragmatism is still underdeveloped to the extent that its purpose it to figure as 'enabling environmental action' and establishing 'an ecology of ethics' in Anthony Weston's words. The systematist outlook that I suggest seeks to correct this apparent lack of attention at the higher systemic levels of environmental action, and this outlook goes further in questioning the centrality of value attitudes in forming environmental behaviour. Although admitting it as a major factor, it wishes to include the whole range of determinants as well that we have scientific reason to believe play a role to the outcome of behaviour. This total picture of the meteorology of environmental behaviour – so to say – aims at capturing Weston's 'ecology of ethics'. It aims at a dynamic and situated understanding of human behaviour towards nature, which rids itself of atomism – much in the same way as atomism and monism was abandoned in the value-question.

It is in this sense I believe it is necessary with a big scale picture and a holistic approach based on scientific knowledge of structures determining environmental behaviour in order to capture

all relevant truths in our turning around environmental problems. As such, I think environmental pragmatism is a good step in this direction. The positive suggestions offered by environmental pragmatists will be diverse and subject to debate. However, as long as their goals lie in achieving progress based on common agreements rather than dispute over differences for its own sake, I believe this debate may be productive towards the goal of accelerating the environmental movement as such. Its conclusions may have to be fitted to a wider audience in the future, an outward orientation that seems far in the horizon still. However, as its progress towards its goals necessitates work on several levels, its work at the theoretical level is well on its way.

As I have indicated, there already exists a myriad of valuable systemic perspectives on the environmental crisis, unfortunately (or perhaps luckily) far too many for my current discussion. I have touched upon only some, like environmental game-theory, as illustrated by Hardin; the analysis of capitalist consumerism and consumerist solutions, like in Zizek or Bookchin. Still, I leave behind a vast array of other contributions from authors in both philosophy and other areas as the social or human sciences that can help us understand why it is we do that we do and what we could plausibly do about it given this information. Work remains to assimilate these contributions and make them available for use in environmental strategizing. However, the structural system considerations presented so far should, I think, suffice to claim the following – that the most important message to be conveyed today is that the global failures to adequately dissipate the current problems are too consistent, too systematic to be explained by moral fault alone without also addressing the systemic features of such problems. These patterns are not the behaviour expected if everyone stood on bare ground informed only by rational deliberation and free personal choice. If the ways the game is rigged continues to be overlooked, it seems the address of the problems will proceed just as ineffectively and stagnantly as to this day. Both philosophers and scientists must then collaborate to discover and understand the systems and mechanisms at play so that changing *them* may become a primary focus of our attention.

4.2 Final remarks

Some might ask why I have chosen not to use terms like 'structuralism', 'structural functionalism' or the Jamesian 'functionalism' to designate the current 'system-oriented' approach; or why I have omitted words like 'consequentialism' or 'utilitarianism' from discussion, as these positions are indeed quite consequence oriented in their wording. The reason is mainly that these terms, like many of the terms and dichotomies already disputed, contain philosophical baggage and historical and theoretical affiliations that I do not think needs to be included. As a meta-theoretical pluralism, the use of such terms risks restricting, rather than opening to the myriad approaches that would be valuable. I want the current standpoint to be 'light-weight' and avoid as many labels as possible in the attempt to provide a broad common ground within ethics and philosophy. I do not think that aligning with particular intellectual schools in sociology (a practice disliked also by James himself) is necessary, nor do I think a consequential orientation in ethics is the only way to yield valuable contributions in environmental causes, even if I might admit to thinking it an advantage. As to utilitarianism as an even more specific subcategory than consequentialism, I think it would be even more counter-productive, if not incompatible with the open meta-theoretical pluralism I endorse. Quickly lending itself to monism, it seems difficult to defend as a requirement at the meta-theoretical level, even though fully committed utilitarians (as well as deontologists) are welcome in the collaborative meta-theoretical enterprise outlined in the above.

However careful with labels as it might be, environmental pragmatism, as I understand it admittedly amounts to a thinly veiled defense of empiricism over rationalism in environmental philosophy. Quoting Hegel as I did in the introductory epigraph may then strike readers as odd seeing as the following pages set out to criticize an overly rationalistic paradigm within environmental philosophy. Hegel is, as we may know, considered by many as the very epitome of rationalist thought. However, in the spirit of William James' attempt to unite the two fundamental cannons of philosophy – the rationalist and the empiricist – I think the quote neatly illustrates this attempt: Empiricist as James may have been, he wanted to acknowledge that the truth is rarely completely captured in one perspective or theory, because theories are always just approximations or abstractions of outside reality. Therefore, a synthesis, in the Hegelian wording, is needed. My intention has thus been to contribute to this balance between seemingly unsurpassable differences in philosophy. In the vein of pragmatism, the attempt is not to stifle the other part by showing how one version or the other is immutably *correct*, but rather to

provide a framework in which irreducibly different theories may coexist and even mutually inform the other to grander wholes. I believe this is about time: Theoretical physicists have long settled with the fact that two of their most defining theories – relativity and quantum mechanics – are utterly incompatible, but still undeniably *true* when applied to their respective large- and small-scale areas. However, as long as their *grand unified theory of everything* is still in the blue, the incompatibility must be left at just that, despite the intellectual discomfort it may cause.

I have defended the general attitude of an environmental pragmatism, although I recognize its many articulated and unarticulated problems and needs for further adjustment. As such a young contender in the field, its problems are no doubt numerous. Still, after reviewing some of its opponents' criticisms, as well as my own, I continue to be convinced of its core aims, namely the belief that environmental ethics should become practical, efficient and relevant to environmental, not only philosophical problems, and should play both a strategic and tactical role in the fundamental way we approach environmentalism. Environmental pragmatism satisfies some intuitions and indeed frustrations I held ever since my first introduction to the subject; that many positions and contributions to the field tended to theorize over the metaphysics of particularly romantic and pristine parts of wild nature, although this seemed to have little to do with economy, consumption or politics at the ground level aside from the blunt moral finger directed at it. It made me ask myself; is moral and metaphysical approaches appropriate as a main perspective on such problems? Is disenchantment, as discussed by critical theorists, or Callicott's quantum theoretical 'oneness of the universe' (1989, p. 171), really the issue when considering climate change, consumptive patterns, or globalization? Can the recommendation to 'identify with nature' as in deep ecology be fruitful to achieve vast restructuring in human societies? Even Holmes Rolston, with his remarks about meditating in the wilderness, will surely admit that humanity as a species cannot meditate its way out of the crisis (Brennan & Lo, 2011). I felt that such approaches somewhat sidetracked and displaced the real problems, when, concerned with *wilderness* per se, it evaded the concrete dynamics of the *human* component, which seemed discussed only incidentally and fragmented by philosophers or eco-theorists outside the main environmental philosophy debate. As Ben Minteer expresses it, he fears that the *more-than-human*, in David Abram's terms, comes at the cost of the *fully human*; in admiring the objects of our moral protection, we must not lose sight of ourselves and our practical task of achieving this protection.

As I hope contributions such as these may help bring serious societal focus firmly to the agenda of environmental philosophy, I realize there is a long way to go from here, just as there was at the outset. I have no conceit that environmental pragmatism or systemic outlooks may gain the explosive popularity that was sought after in the introduction, nor do I believe that it will be massively decisive to the environmental situation even provided its wide adoption. I am still quite pessimistic as to whether many environmental goals are reachable within the time available, such as for instance the 2-degree goal of global warming. However, I aspire for pragmatism and the systemic outlook to be helpful in both a negative and a positive sense: negative in dispelling some of what I believe are commonly held misconceptions and faulty foundations within some of environmental philosophy's proceedings; and positive in providing further impetus to an emerging practical mindset in philosophy that is increasingly focused on politics, social change, resource management, anti-deforestation or animal rights, and the strategic planning that is involved in achieving results in such areas.

Despite my many doubts, I will finish on a positive note by reminding of the real power and reach of philosophy at its fullest. We know how the ideas of Marx ultimately paved the way for an entire global revolution; the way the ideas of enlightenment thinkers as Montesquieu, Locke or Rousseau sprawled out to every far corner of modern societies; or the way Steven Segal is universally recognized as the worst part-time philosopher in all of history. There may be no end to the potential reach of ideas when an accessible common ground is established. Knowing that anything is possible so long as the many act in unison can be a vital lesson in overcoming a mutual structural stalemate. In spite the deficiencies of beliefs and desires; they may nonetheless be our starting point from which the collective movement out of the rut begins. Knowing both *what* should be done and *how* is what allows a coordinated grand change of direction. People will never believe exactly the same. However, with a qualified optimism I want to cite one of today's most popular fiction-writers on power, George R. R. Martin (1998, p. 120): 'Power resides where men *believe* it resides.' Overcoming resignation and believing it can be done *is* important. The trick, then, is making enough people's beliefs, whatever they may be, work towards the same goals.

Literature

Abram, D. (2012). *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (First Printing edition.). Viking.

Ariansen, P. (1992). *Miljøfilosofi: En innføring*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Asch, S. (1951). Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments. In H. Guetzkow (Ed.), *Groups, leadership and men; research in human relations* (pp. 177–190). Oxford, England: Carnegie Press.

Bargh, J. A. (2007). Introduction. In J. A. Bargh (Ed.), *Social Psychology and the Unconscious: The Automaticity of Higher Mental Processes* (pp. 1–7). Psychology Press.

Bernstein, R. J. (1972). *Praxis and action*. London: Duckworth.

Biel, A., Hansson, B., & Martensson, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Individual and Structural Determinants of Environmental Practice*. Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Ltd.

Bookchin, M. (1994). *Which way for the ecology movement?*. Edinburgh, Scotland ; San Francisco, Calif: AK Press.

Bookchin, M. (1995). *The philosophy of social ecology: essays on dialectical naturalism* (2nd. ed., rev.). Montréal : New York: Black Rose Books.

Brennan, A., & Lo, Y.-S. (2011). Environmental Ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011.). Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/ethics-environmental/

Callanan, L. P. (2010). Intrinsic Value for the Environmental Pragmatist. *Res Cogitans*, *1*(1), 132–142.

Callicott, J. B. (1989). *In Defense of Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press.

Callicott, J. B. (2009). The Convergence Hypothesis Falsified: Implicit Intrinsic Value, Operational Rights, and de Facto Standing in the Endangered Species Act. In B. A. Minteer (Ed.), *Nature in Common?: Environmental Ethics and the Contested Foundations of Environmental Policy*. Temple University Press.

De Waal, F. (2011). *Moral behavior in animals*. TEDxPeachtree. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_do_animals_have_morals

Dinas, E. (2010). *The Impressionable Years: The Formative Role of Family, Vote and Political Events During Early Adulthood*. European University Institute.

Dyrevelferdsloven § 3. (2009, June 19). In *Lovdata*. Landbruks- og matdepartementet. Retrieved from https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2009-06-19-97#KAPITTEL_1

Ghose, T. (2012, November 15). Animals Are Moral Creatures, Scientist Argues. Retrieved November 26, 2014, from http://www.livescience.com/24802-animals-have-morals-book.html

Gonya, L. (2010, April 20). Why the United States Refuses to Ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Retrieved from http://www.worldissues360.com/index.php/why-the-united-states-refuses-to-ratify-the-kyoto-protocol-13200/

Hansson, B. (2003). A dialogue concerning the usefulness of the social sciences. In A. Biel, B. Hansson, & M. Martensson (Eds.), *Individual and Structural Determinants of Environmental Practice* (pp. 183–225).

Hardin, G. (2008a). The Tragedy of the Commons. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 272–282). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Hardin, G. (2008b). Who Cares for Posterity? In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 350–356). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Hargrove, E. C. (2003). Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value. In A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An Anthology* (pp. 175–190). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Hogg, M. A., & Vaughan, G. M. (2008). *Social psychology*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Hookway, C. (2008, August 16). Pragmatism. Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/pragmatism/

James, W. (1907). *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. Longmans, Green. Retrieved from http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5116

Jardins, J. R. D. (2012). *Environmental Ethics*. Cengage Learning.

Keller, D. R. (2009). Deep Ecology. In J. B. Callicott & R. Frodeman (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of environmental ethics and philosophy* (pp. 206–211). Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA. Retrieved from http://davidkeller.us/publications/Keller-Deep_Ecology%20EEEP.pdf

Kraut, R. (2014). Aristotle's Ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014.). Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/aristotle-ethics/

Laplante, K. de. (2004). Can You Teach Environmental Philosophy Without Being an Environmentalist? *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, *8*(2), 198–212. doi:10.1163/1568535042690763

Light, A. (2002). Symposium Introduction: Eric Katz's Nature as Subject. *Ethics & the Environment*, *7*(1), 102–108. doi:10.1353/een.2002.0008

Light, A. (2003). Ecological restoration and the culture of nature. In A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An Anthology* (pp. 398–411). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Light, A., & Katz, E. (Eds.). (1996). *Environmental Pragmatism*. London; New York: Routledge.

Martin, G. R. R. (1998). *A clash of kings*. London: Voyager.

McShane, K. (2007). Why Environmental Ethics Shouldn't Give Up on Intrinsic Value: *Environmental Ethics*, *29*(1), 43–61. doi:10.5840/enviroethics200729128

McShane, K. (2009). Environmental Ethics: An Overview. *Philosophy Compass*, *4*(3), 407–420. doi:10.1111/j.1747-9991.2009.00206.x

Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *67*(4), 371–378.

Mill, J. S. (2008). In Defence of Steady-State Economics. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 600–603). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Minteer, B. A. (2006). *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Minteer, B. A. (2012). *Refounding Environmental Ethics: Pragmatism, Principle, and Practice*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Minteer, B. A., & Manning, R. E. (2000). Convergence in Environmental Values: an Empirical and Conceptual Defense. *Philosophy & Geography*, *3*(1), 47–60. doi:10.1080/13668790008573693

Minteer, B. A., & Manning, R. E. (2003). Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics: Democracy, Pluralism, and the Management of Nature. In A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An Anthology* (pp. 319–330). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Moriarty, P. V. (2006). Pluralism Without Pragmatism. *International Society for Environmental Ethics and International Association for Environmental Philosophy*. Retrieved from http://www.cep.unt.edu/isee2/2006/Moriarty2.pdf

Næss, A. (1989). *Ecology, community and lifestyle: outline of an ecosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Næss, A. (2008). Ecosophy T: Deep Versus Shallow Ecology. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 219–228). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Næss, A., & Devall, B. (2008). Deep Ecology. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 228–233). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Nagel, T. (1974). What Is It Like to Be a Bat? *The Philosophical Review*, *83*(4), 435. doi:10.2307/2183914

Norton, B. G. (1984). Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism: *Environmental Ethics*, *6*(2), 131–148. doi:10.5840/enviroethics19846233

Norton, B. G. (1994). *Toward Unity among Environmentalists*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norton, B. G. (1997). Convergence and Contextualism: Some Clarifications and a Reply to Steverson. *Environmental Ethics, 19*(1), 87–100. doi:10.5840/enviroethics199719141

Norton, B. G. (2003). Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism. In A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An Anthology* (pp. 163–174). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Palmer, C. (2003). An Overview of Environmental Ethics. In A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An Anthology* (pp. 15–37). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Parker, K. A. (1996). Pragmatism and Environmental Thought. In A. Light & E. Katz (Eds.), *Environmental Pragmatism* (pp. 21–37). London; New York: Routledge.

Passer, M. W., Smith, R. E., Holt, N., Bremner, A., Sutherland, E., & Vliek, M. (2008). *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Pearson, C. H. (2014). Does Environmental Pragmatism Shirk Philosophical Duty? *Environmental Values*, *23*(3), 335–352. doi:10.3197/096327114X13947900181879

Peirce, C. S. (1878, January). How to Make Our Ideas Clear. *Popular Science Monthly*, *12*, 286–302.

Pragmatism. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Retrieved from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pragmatism

Rawls, J. (2005). *Political liberalism* (Expanded ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Samuelsson, L. (2010). Environmental pragmatism and environmental philosophy: A bad marriage!

Sartre, J.-P. (1993). *Being and Nothingness*. (H. E. Barnes, Trans.) (Reprint edition.). Washington Square Press.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2014). Consequentialism. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014.). Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/consequentialism/

Stone, C. D. (2008). Should Trees Have Standing? Towards Legal Rights for Natural Objects. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 298–308). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Sylvan, R. (2003). Is there a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic? In A. Light & H. Rolston (Eds.), *Environmental ethics: An Anthology* (pp. 47–52). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Tangeland, T. (2013). *Miljøholdninger blant norske forbrukere: Endringer i perioden 1993 – 2012*. SIFO. Retrieved from http://www.sifo.no/page/preview/preview/10081/78661.html

Taylor, P. W. (2011). *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (25th Anniversary edition.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Twenge, J. M., Keith, W., & Freeman, E. C. (2012). Generational differences in young adults' life goals, concern for others, and civic orientation, 1966–2009. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*(5), 1045–1062. doi:10.1037/a0027408

Warren, K. J. (2008). The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 33–48). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Watson, R. (2008). A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition.). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Weston, A. (1996a). Before Environmental Ethics. In A. Light & E. Katz (Eds.), *Environmental Pragmatism* (pp. 139–160). London; New York: Routledge.

Weston, A. (1996b). Beyond intrinsic value - Pragmatism in environmental ethics. In A. Light & E. Katz (Eds.), *Environmental Pragmatism* (pp. 285–306). London; New York: Routledge.

Weston, A. (2004, Spring). Multicentrism: A manifesto. *Environmental Ethics*, *26*(1), 25–40.

White, L. (2008). The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis. In L. P. Pojman & P. Pojman (Eds.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* (5th edition., pp. 14–21). Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth.

Zimbardo, P. (2008). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (Reprint edition.). New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks.

Zimmerman, M. J. (2010). Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010.). Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/value-intrinsic-extrinsic/

Zizek, S. (12010). Zizek - Are we living in the end times? part 1/2. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmE6EJI8BFk&list=HL1383680588

Zizek, S. (2009a). *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce*. London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (2009b). *Slavoj Zizek RSA Animate First As Tragedy, Then As Farce*. Retrieved from http://archive.org/details/SlavojZizekFirstAsTragedyThenAsFarce

Žižek, S. (2011). *Living in the end times*. London ; New York: Verso.

πρᾶγμα. (2013, June 29). *Wiktionary, The Free Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%CF%80%CF%81%E1%BE%B6%CE%B3%CE%BC%CE%B1>